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DECORATION AND FURNITURE  
OF  
TOWN HOUSES

‘The only essential distinction between decorative and other art is the being fitted for a fixed place ; and in that place, related, either in subordination or in command, to the effect of other pieces of art. And all the greatest art which the world has produced is thus fitted for a place, and subordinated to a purpose. There is no existing highest-order art but is decorative. The best sculpture yet produced has been the decoration of a temple front—the best painting, the decoration of a room. . . . Beautiful art can only be produced by people who have beautiful things about them, and leisure to look at them ; and unless you provide some elements of beauty for your workmen to be surrounded by, you will find that no elements of beauty can be invented by them’—RUSKIN





Front piece



A Drawing Room Corner

WAS SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

R W EDIS F S A ARCHT \*





# DECORATION & FURNITURE OF TOWN HOUSES

A SERIES OF CANTOR LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
SOCIETY OF ARTS, 1880, AMPLIFIED AND ENLARGED

BY

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ARCHITECT

*WITH 29 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND NUMEROUS SKETCHES*



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## P R E F A C E.

WHEN the Council of the Society of Arts did me the honour of asking me to deliver one of the series of 'Cantor Lectures' for 1880, and their able and indefatigable secretary, Mr. H. Trueman Wood, suggested that I should make the subject of my course, Decoration Applied to Modern Houses, I naturally felt that the subject was a wide and difficult one to treat, inasmuch as, even amongst the educated professors of the arts of architecture and painting, there were so many opinions at once diverse, and oftentimes at utter variance with each other ; but in the belief that a series of plain practical Lectures on Decoration and Furniture might be of use to the general public, I accepted the invitation, with the full intention of avoiding, as far as possible, the trammels of any particular school, and of offering, so far as I could, some practical advice,

—founded on the experience of over twenty years of hard professional work and study,—for the better arrangement in Decoration and Furniture of Modern Houses, believing that I should at least be given credit for honesty of purpose, and for an earnest desire to set forth, to the best of my ability, some practical hints which might be found of service to those who were anxious to get rid of the utter commonplaceness and vulgarity, of the ordinary decorative treatment of the homes they live in.

In specially applying my remarks to Town Houses, I did so, rather from the fact that those who live in towns are, to a certain extent, more dependent on the art-work in their houses for any pleasure or charm of eye, than those who, living in the country, are surrounded with all the beauty of natural form and colour in ever-changing and varying shape and shade, as well as that in treating especially of Town Houses, my remarks would to a large extent equally well apply to country houses.

I am quite aware that the subject of my lectures has, in the last few years, been lectured and written upon almost *ad nauseam*, and I might well have hesi-



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tated before entering an arena, in which there is, and must always be, an immense difference of opinion as to what is best and most artistic, for the decoration and furnishing of the houses we live in, combined with comfort, convenience, and moderation of cost.

The favourable reception of the 'Cantor Lectures' by my audiences and by the Press generally, encouraged me in materially adding to them ; and in now offering them in enlarged and illustrated form, to a larger and perhaps more critical audience, the general public, I do so with the full knowledge of the many and varied opinions entertained in these days of so-called 'Art Revival' on all art questions, and more particularly on those connected with the especial subjects of my lectures; but at the same time I am sanguine enough to believe that there is a large portion of the public who desire to be better informed on these all-important questions, and who will give me credit for an earnest desire to lay before them, as simply and as plainly as possible, some few general hints which I hope may be found of use to those who wish to make the houses they live in not only artistic but pleasant and comfortable, without following out any set fashion of Decoration or Fur-

niture, and without involving any great excess in expenditure, which, under the ordinary tenure of town houses, they would be unwilling to incur.

The object of my course of 'Cantor Lectures' was to endeavour to lead the public to think more about the artistic furnishing of their houses, to show that good art could be combined with comfort and moderate expense, and that the better and more artistic decoration and furniture of modern houses could be combined with fitness, comfort, and common-sense, without following the 'clap-trap' conventionalities and senseless eccentricities, which have gone out to the world under the grossly mistaken, or rather misapplied, denomination of 'high art.'

For some years past I have given the subject of art decoration and furniture my special study, have lectured upon it at different times, and written numerous articles which have appeared in the pages of 'The Week,' 'The Queen Newspaper,' and various other journals, and in the following pages I propose to enlarge materially what I have already spoken and written upon the subject.

In the illustrations which accompany these revised

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Lectures, I have endeavoured to select examples of the various subjects treated of, from the best modern types; naturally I could only do this by selecting, from various well-known manufacturers, examples of their best works, and in offering them my cordial thanks for the courteous manner in which they have permitted me to select from their stocks; and to illustrate such examples as I thought might best exemplify the teaching set forth in my various remarks, it must be distinctly understood that I have made no invidious selection of firms, but have accepted the opportunity offered to me, without hesitation or reserve, by those whose works I illustrate, of selecting such examples only which I thought might bear upon the subjects specially treated of in my Lectures, and which seemed to me to carry out, more or less, the spirit of real excellence or general improvement in design of the various accessories and necessities, in the Decoration and Furniture of modern houses.

It would manifestly have been egotistical and improper to have offered a series of my own designs, and the few illustrations which bear my name to them as the designer, are offered with some amount of

diffidence, and only as setting forth, in however slight and humble a manner, the principles which I have throughout the following pages endeavoured to advocate.

I would gladly have omitted them altogether, but that they set forth in definite shape what can be done to improve the general dreariness of an ordinary Town House, by a little thought and a conscientious regard for use and comfort, combined with artistic design and arrangement.

In selecting the works of different manufacturers for illustration, I have spared no time or trouble to obtain, as far as possible, those examples which, to my mind, combined general artistic excellence with appropriateness of design, form, and colouring, and moderation of cost, while at the same time I have given other examples which, combining as they do a great amount of artistic skill, time, and labour, with much elaboration of design and treatment, are necessarily more costly.

I am indebted to my friend Mr. Maurice B. Adams for the exceedingly careful and conscientious manner in which these illustrations have been prepared, and for the hearty co-operation and able assistance he has

given to me in preparing the several drawings, in which, whatever be their general merit as regards design, I feel confident every care has been taken to reproduce, as faithfully as possible,—aided in many instances by careful photographs done by Messrs. Bedford, Lemère, and Co.,—the various examples of Decoration and Furniture selected by me for illustration.

ROBERT W. EDIS.

14 FITZROY SQUARE .

*London, W.*



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THE  
DECORATION AND FURNITURE  
OF  
TOWN HOUSES.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN the various suggestions I may offer, in the following course of Lectures, I am desirous of putting forth no dogmatic rules, of laying down no stringent laws from which there shall be no departure, but rather to offer some practical hints to those who are seeking to depart from the general commonplaceness and vulgarity of design, in the decoration and furniture of our modern houses. I do not desire to enter into any battle of styles, believing that true beauty and art form are dependent upon no particular style—Classic, Gothic, or so-called Queen Anne—and that in the houses we live in, it is first of all essential that everything shall be as fitting as possible, and that extrava-

gance of all kinds, or so-called 'high art,' shall be subservient to comfort, truth of construction, utility, and general convenience.

In addressing an audience representing the more educated portion of the public, I am most anxious to impress upon you the desirability of having everything about you beautiful in itself, and fitting for its special purpose, and that, however commonplace the object, it shall be good in form, design, and colour, and that the present craving, if I may so call it, after artistic work in decoration and furniture, shall not degenerate into any set fashion of form or colouring, which, under the clap-trap denomination of 'high art,' is utterly false and unreal.

You do not, I presume, want to make show places of your homes, in which the fashion of an hour shall be exemplified, in the various monotonous dreariness of sage greens and peacock blues in papering, or in quaint eccentricities of design and form in furniture and which, in a few short years, will be looked upon as crude and tasteless.

In this country, where the love of home life and its teachings of domestic comfort and peace especially pertain, all questions of decoration and furniture must necessarily be more or less influenced by these condi-

tions, and we cannot expect in an age, in which there are so many causes to influence opinion, to obtain any special unity of taste, or to have that strong harmonious feeling, which brought about the great schools of religious painting in the Middle Ages.

It is the fashion amongst a certain class of artists of the present day to decry all modern art, and to seek for ancient examples, Greek, Roman, Mediæval, or Oriental, on which to found their ideas of decorative art in the present day ; but I cannot but think this arises from a feeling of shame at their own incompetence, and a desire to slur over their own ignorance, by feeble attempts to copy the art of other countries.

The work that we have to do to-day, is 'not to be content,' as Lord Aberdeen says, 'with the timid and servile hand of the copyist, but with a due regard to the changes of customs and manners, to the difference of climate, and the conditions of modern society,' to adapt the art work in our houses, so that it be beautiful, fitting, and suitable.

Thanks to the great progress made in the chief arts of architecture and painting in the last quarter of a century, to the general advantage of technical education throughout the country, by the establishment of the Government School of Design at South Kensington,

with its numerous metropolitan and provincial branches, and to the great number of loan collections at home and abroad, there has been increased opportunity of studying art of all kinds, and more especially of those offshoots of architectural arts which are known generally under the name of 'decorative arts.'

The various exhibitions in this country, and on the Continent, in the last few years, have exercised an immense influence on the taste, not only of the public, but of the workmen in all the crafts of British industry, more especially associated with the industrial art of the country ; the innumerable beautiful examples of ancient art productions of all countries, and the mass of publications illustrating them, have set us all to think more of the things of every-day life in our homes, and by their teaching, have gradually imbued all classes with a desire and love for beautiful form and colour, and a distaste for the crude vulgarities and hideous forms, with which we have been for so long content.

Too much praise cannot be given to the Society of Arts, for the conscientious way in which they have for long years steadily sought, by all the means in their power, to foster and encourage the cause of art and science, and from their exertions and initiative, have sprung up most of the schools of practical art-teaching

throughout the country ; and it is but fair to remember that this Society, soon after its foundation in 1754, set itself to promote the more intelligent study of science and art, by offering prizes in the classes, of what were then called 'polite arts,' of painting, drawing, and sculpture, and, even at this period, offered further prizes for the arts applied to industry, in patterns for weavers, calico printers, and furniture ; by which, as evinced in the reports of the Society, much real good was obtained, and a manifest improvement in design. As the Royal Academy and other kindred societies increased in power, the arts of painting and sculpture became more under their especial management and control, until in 1843, when the late Prince Consort—whose never-flagging endeavours to improve the domestic arts of this country must always earn for him a lasting gratitude—became President of the Society and through his advice and influence, the society took up the especial work of developing the application of the Fine Arts to manufactures ; and the outcome of these efforts was to produce the 1851 Exhibition, and, at the same time, conjointly brought about the establishment of the earlier schools of design, from which sprang the present great school at South Kensington, and the present system of Government art education.

In praising the present schools, I must take exception to some of their teaching. I cannot see why it is necessary to make students work continually upon designs of repeated geometrical forms—in which there is an absence of all true artistic feeling—which are called ornamental, or to strive after, what has been justly called, ‘a mere photographic correctness in the studies, both from the flat and from the round,’ in which there is no beauty or life, and which tends to engender a stiffness and conventionality of treatment in all after-work. All this is machinery work of the hand, and loses all trace of human mind or thought; for if art work is worth anything at all, it must be, not in the production of slavish repetition of some set pattern, but in the skilful and artistic rendering of ornament, in which, while it may be necessary to keep up a certain line of decorative treatment, there shall be no everlasting sameness and repetition of drawing or colouring; the same line of scroll work may be treated with some diversity of colouring and drawing, and yet be as harmonious in tone and general effect, as the same work continued with exact repetition of form and shade.

I do not here advocate the teaching of some of our eccentric school of artists, if I may call them so, who hold that no line or shade shall be repeated, or that we



shall make our walls 'studies' in any particular shades of colouring.

Unfortunately, it would seem that, to a great extent, the present opportunities have not brought real life or real pleasure with them, but have worked out a fashion—a painted pretence and sham—worse even than the fashion of dress; and the decorative arts seem likely to depend rather on luxury and fashion than on any real love of art. Hence has arisen a race of so-called decorators, who, working with little knowledge and less love, are, under the name of 'art decoration,' creating a fashion of design and furniture, which is worse even than that of the dead days of the earlier part of the present century, when people were content to see around them the ugliest forms, the meanest designs, and the dreariest of colours. We must have care that so-called 'art decoration' does not degenerate into the feeble prettinesses of ignorant designers, into the fashion of so-called 'art papers,' or the flimsiness of furniture, imitated or copied from Japanese or Eastern examples, and having no element of real culture or imaginative power of mind, associated with skilful and loving work of hand and eye. Without doubt there is, on the part of the educated classes, a desire to have in every-day life, and in the houses they live in, furniture

and decoration which shall have some real feeling for truth of construction, beauty of form, and general harmony of colour. But if we are to have decoration, let it be of the best kind ; if we must imitate, let us seek for the best examples ; and, above all, if we are able to afford figure decoration of any kind in our rooms, let it be of the best type, well drawn, treated as flat decoration, not as easel pictures, and not based on quaint and angular models, dressed up in varied anachronism of ancient dress. The houses we live in are, after all, the main teaching of our lives ; and I am confident that no amount of outside teaching can help forward the love of beauty and truth, in form and in colour, so much as the proper and decent arrangement of the rooms and belongings which are continually before us.

While, for years past, there has been a revival in all work, specially pertaining to ecclesiastical decoration and furniture, the subject of house decoration, until quite recently, has been signally uncared for. It is unfortunate that we cannot be content to study the art work of other nations, without seeking to plagiarise from it, or to adapt its form and colour in our own manufactures and designs. Nothing can be more beautiful in itself than the art work of India, China, and Japan, whether applied to textile fabrics, carved

or painted wood work, pottery or porcelain, gold and silver, or lacquer work ; but nothing can be more atrocious than the imitations with which we are nowadays inundated.

Nothing can be worse than art at second-hand, more especially when the associations and feelings of the two sets of workers, the original and the imitators, are totally different. In the study of all Oriental art we can gain infinite knowledge of skill and grace of design and workmanship, and power and beauty of drawing and colouring, but the art-workers of this country are no more able to imitate these attributes, which we admire so much, than they can fly; and when we hear of rooms decorated with imitation Chinese bamboo work, and tinted sealing-wax red and gold, with splashes of blue and green, in imitation of Japanese lacquer, we can only regret that the time and money thus wasted, in fruitless endeavour to obtain what at its best must be but a bad imitation, should not be applied to decoration and drawing more in keeping with our own associations and surroundings. We may receive a higher and better influence in decorative taste by studying the art-work of Oriental nations, but we can never attain to any true artistic character of work, by slavishly copying the design and colouring of artists,

who worked under totally different associations and traditions.

It was lamentable to notice in the Indian collection, at the last Paris Exhibition, the numerous examples of mongrel work, the result, as Dr. Birdwood, in his valuable handbook on the Indian section says truly, 'of the influences on Indian art, of English society, missionary schools, schools of art, and international exhibitions, and, above all, of the irresistible energy of the mechanical productions of Manchester and Birmingham, and Paris and Vienna.' This was especially noticeable in the Prince of Wales's collection, in the way in which the native chiefs and princes, 'in many instances, despising their own arts, had literal copies executed in solid silver' of the latest Birmingham imitations of Indian pattern tea-pots, paper weights, and centre pieces.

Indian rugs and shawls have noticeably degenerated through the same bad influences; Cashmere shawls are no longer the exquisite productions of the spontaneous art feeling of the Indian workman, but are based upon the 'improved shawl patterns' which French importers have laid before them. The design and colouring of the rugs and carpets which are now sent over have been materially damaged by the Government practice

of making the prisoners in their Indian jails enter upon the lucrative trade of carpet making, and thus, to a great extent, extinguishing the caste weavers, with whom has perished, let us hope not for ever, the local traditions of their art. The carpets thus made are poor in quality, compared with the old examples, and the colours and patterns are crude and bad.

To quote Dr. Birdwood again :—

‘ Of late years the shop-windows of Regent Street and Oxford Street have been filled with electrotypes reproductions of Burmese, Cashmere, Lucknow, Cutch, and Madras silver and gold work, along with Manchester, Coventry, and Paisley imitations of Indian chintzes, kincobs, and shawls. This is simply to deprave and debase English manufactures and English taste. No people have a truer feeling for art than English men and women of all classes, or purer elements of a national decorative style and methods ; and the right and fruitful use of looking at superb examples of Indian jewellery, tapestries, and pottery, is not to make literal copies of them, but to kindle the sense of wonder and imagination in us to nobler achievements in our indigenous and industrial arts.’

It is impossible to slavishly copy the distinct and indigenous varieties of Oriental decorative arts, with

any satisfaction in the decorative work of this country ; although it is quite possible to learn much from their exquisite design and treatment, and to use and adapt (as I shall hereafter describe) some of their work in the decoration and ornamentation of our own homes.

If a man may be judged by the friends he has, surely much more so may his artistic culture and love of beauty be arrived at, by the nature of the things with which he surrounds himself in his home.

It is unfortunately true that in many houses we still find decoration and furniture in which there is no element of beauty, in which costliness and vulgarity seem to run together, while some of the modern teachers run into eccentricity and grotesqueness of design and colouring, forgetting that in art, as in everyday life, eccentricities, either of design or colouring, are to be avoided ; and that, as in the well-dressed woman of our acquaintance, so in all art decoration, we should be able to see general harmony and simplicity of effect, in which there shall be no glaring patterns or colours.

The fittings, hangings, and general furniture of a room should not only be fitting and suitable for their various uses, but in harmony with the general decoration of the walls, and this decoration should depend not upon any fashion or style, but on the general

appreciation and adoption of colour and beauty of form, and withal ensuring a home-like feeling, made more beautiful and interesting by the imaginative taste and daily art education of those who live in our homes.

Depend upon it, the decoration of our houses is not a mere thing of fashion, but a constant recurring pleasure, and beyond all this, to a great extent, the absolute art education of all, who dwell within or visit us in our homes.

Since the latter days of the Renaissance, when the decadence and fall of all real art practically set in, there have been sundry fashions in architecture, painting, and decoration, which have had a short and fitful life, giving way, like all fashions, which are grounded on no love or real feeling, to the caprice and taste of the last new comer. From the end of the sixteenth century we have gone through many phases—from Classic to Gothic, and from Gothic to Queen Anne. We had for a long period an affectation of a classic taste, when the decoration of Pompeii was imitated *ad nauseam*, but without understanding or knowledge of the principles of the art; the walls were overladen with heavy colouring and gilding; and in furniture, comfort and utility were sacrificed to classic forms. To quote a late writer on art in the 'Quarterly Review':

‘Furniture, fire-irons, teapots, and the various objects of daily domestic use, made after the manner of the ancients, could scarcely be turned to their legitimate purposes, however well adapted they may have been to the sacrifices and ceremonies of a Greek or Roman temple. Chairs and sofas strictly made upon the model of the *sella curulis* and the bronze *bisellium*, might have been comfortable in the Forum, but were execrable in the drawing-room. We were at last fairly driven out of the Classic mood. We could neither eat, drink, nor sit in comfort.’

Then came the Gothic revival, and in furniture we exchanged the curule chair for the ‘narrow seat and the knobby back,’ not more comfortable or pleasant to our persons than the ancient ‘sedilia’; nor can much be said for the carved cabinets, ponderous sideboards, and imitation mediæval furniture, constructed, of course, ‘on unexceptionable authority after the true fashion of our ancestors.’ And now has set in a fashion, dedicated to her most sacred Majesty, Queen Anne, a fashion which has developed much of really good art character, and which, after all, properly applied, is really bringing us back to old English work. Amongst the more educated professors of the style, we find at present many pretty conceits, which are not worthy of the



name of art ; but we also find good construction and carefulness of design, which we may hail as forerunners of better times, and more artistic work. It is but fair to say that to Messrs. Street, R.A., Norman Shaw, R.A., Waterhouse, A.R.A., E. W. Godwin, W. Burges, P. Webb, and other architects, and to Messrs. Morris and Co., Messrs. Crace, Messrs. Gillow, Messrs. Jackson and Graham, Messrs. Jeffrey, and other well-known firms, much praise is due for their efforts in the cause of artistic design in decorative hangings and furniture.

I do not intend to treat my subject from any point of view, in which money is no object, but to endeavour to show that good artistic work may be done as reasonably as bad work, and that beauty of form, colour, and design, may be as economically applied to house decoration, and furniture, and with infinitely more satisfaction, than the vulgar hangings and commonplace furniture to which we have for so many years been accustomed.

In these days of luxury and artistic proclivities, large sums of money are spent upon internal decoration and furniture, without much idea of taste or common sense ; money is frittered away in pretentious extravagance, in the shape of gaudy decoration, or elaborately carved and inlaid furniture, and hangings, of most

expensive character, which have little or no real claim to be called artistic or beautiful; a profusion of elaborate ornament is recklessly thrown upon the walls and ceilings, without knowledge and without taste. In olden days, good art did not mean prodigality of colouring, and endless covering of wall or ceiling space, with pattern work in various colours, but was made, as a rule, consistent with the requirements and associations of the period, whether in domestic or religious life.

Nowadays we are too apt to be content to accept the dogmas of a particular school as correct and infallible, and to forget that the true art decoration of houses is not to be made up of fashionable wall papers, or furniture, made after a particular pattern, but is dependent upon the smaller surroundings and articles of daily use. Nor is extravagance of cost necessary for the fitting up of our houses; for I hold that furniture of thoroughly good art design, comfortable in shape, and good in workmanship, may be made without any extravagant outlay, and that plain polished or painted deal furniture, of really good design, is better than all the elaboration of Chippendale fretwork or Queen Anne ornamentation. The pretentious imitation of old work in furniture is in every way to be condemned; and I cannot but quote here the words of the late

M. Viollet le Duc, who, in his ‘*Mobilier Française*,’ says, speaking of modern work generally :—

‘Amongst all these cheap splendours of false taste and false luxury, we are delighted when we find a seat really well made, a good oak table thoroughly strong on its legs, woollen curtains which really look like wool, a comfortable and solid chair, a cupboard which opens and shuts well, showing us inside and out the wood it is really made of, and the object for which it is intended ; let us hope for a return to those healthy ideas, and that in the making of furniture, as in everything else, we may come to understand that true taste consists in appearing that which one is, and not that which one would wish to be.’

I can conceive nothing more terrible than to be doomed to spend one’s life in a house furnished after the fashion of twenty years ago. Dull monotonous walls, on which garish flock papers, of the vulgarest possible design, stare one blankly in the face, with patches here and there of accumulated dirt and dust, or the even worse monstrosities of imitation *moirée* silk, with bunches of gilt flowers tied up in gilt ribbons, and running in symmetrical lines, all carefully sized, like soldiers on parade. Of course, if the flock paper be red, we had red curtains hung on to a gigantic pole,

like the mast of a ship, blossoming out at the ends into bunches of flowers, or turned finials, like enormous hyacinthe bulbs in water. Of course the curtains trailed some feet on the floor, and, when not taken possession of by the pet dog or cat, became the receptacle for dust and dirt, or the hiding place of the remains of some pet's dinner. The chairs were covered with red stuff of some kind ; the table had a red cloth, printed all over with elegant designs of flowers in black, in impossible positions ; the carpet also was probably of some gaudy colour and pattern, covering the whole room with a sprawling pattern of gigantic flowers ; the furniture, of the stiffest possible kind, rows of chairs, seemingly propped up against the wall in straight lines not to task over much the bandy-curved legs which bore them, the so-called 'shaped' backs cut cross-grain of the wood so as to snap sharp off with any extra weight ; an enormous glass over the miserably ugly mantelpiece, in a still more enormous gold frame, with bits of cast plaster ornament, also gilt, stuck on like bats and rats on a barn door, and, like them, showing signs of decay and decomposition ; a so-called side-board, with a drawer in the middle, a cupboard on each side, and another enormous glass overhead. In the drawing-room, we had the same kind of monotony,

only, perhaps, in a different colour ; a green carpet, with peaceful lilies intertwining with each other ; a hearthrug, with a Bengal tiger ill at ease, with his back to the fire, and his face to the lilies ; and a footstool, covered with Berlin wool, representing the pet dog of the period, very much astonished at his proximity to the aforesaid tiger ; green curtains, with a Greek fret or honeysuckle border in yellow or gold ; a gigantic valance, with deep fringe worked into knots over turned wood beads ; furniture, covered with work of crude colours, marriage offerings to our fathers and mothers ; chairs so lightly constructed that you could never be safe upon them ; couches that you could not lie comfortably upon ; tables with legs twisted and turned into impossible shapes ; occasional chairs, which were well named, that they would never stand for the purposes they were intended, except very occasionally indeed ; and the whole arrangements of the room stiff, formal, and uninviting ; the worsted work and the silk or rep covering, tied up, as a rule, in dingy linen covers, and a general air of discomfort and unsociability ; who can wonder that people lived but little in their drawing-rooms ! If there was a bit of colour on the walls, nine times out of ten it was of the tea-tray character, a brilliant illumination of Vesuvius, as it would probably

appear at a pantomime, and not in reality ; a few family portraits, whose particular merits were spoilt by the painting, and everything miserable and unartistic ; so that when you got up the staircase, with its walls made cold and dingy by blocks of imitation marble, if one had any taste at all, the very appearance and tone of the room almost cowed one into silence, or froze one into mere commonplaceness. This is no exaggeration ; there are still hundreds of rooms, in which this utter want of taste prevails ; but, thanks to the increased demand for artistic design of late years in almost everything, there is evinced on the part of the better class of manufacturers of the various articles of domestic use, a desire to provide a class of goods of fair artistic design and of fairly good taste in form and colour.

‘ *Vexatio dat intellectum*,’ and it is not to be supposed that any true knowledge of decoration, and real feeling for things artistic, can be obtained all at once : it is only by a constant study of nature, and of the really beautiful things of art, that the eye becomes educated to understand and appreciate beauty of form, outline, and colour. Foremost in the very rudiments of real art, it must be borne in mind that absolute truth must be the foundation of all good work, that all ornament

should consist of the enrichment of the real construction of the building, that this should in itself be beautiful, and that decoration itself should not be constructed for mere purposes of show and effect, and should possess in itself fitness, proportion, and harmony of design and colouring.

Speaking of our houses, the late Mr. Owen Jones, in his 'Grammar of Ornament,' truly says: 'Architecture is the material expansion of the wants, the faculties, and the sentiments of the age in which it is created,' and 'the decorative arts should possess fitness, proportion, and harmony,' so as to bring about that proper and necessary 'repose which the mind feels when the eye, the intellect, and the affections are satisfied.'

If we examine any of the best work of past ages, either in textile fabrics, furniture, or decoration, we shall see that truth and fitness in design and construction, and harmony in colour and arrangement, are carefully carried out; that there is no sham or imitation, but, so far as practicable, the work is essentially real and true. To carry into our houses the shadow of unreality, by graining or marbling in imitation of the real materials, by giving to cast iron the semblance of wrought, by putting up papers painted to represent

various woods, tiles, or marble, is simply teaching a lie, and asserting in the worst possible taste the semblance of a truth which does not exist; and when the best graining or marbling in the world is done, it is but a miserable satire on the real material. All striving after imitation and unreality is utterly at variance with good taste in decoration, as in life. I do not wish to enter into the moral aspect of the matter, but the words from the chapter on 'Moral Influences of the Dwelling,' in the 'Recreations of a Country Parson,' seem here singularly appropriate. Speaking of our homes, the author of this charming little book says :—

'I think it is now coming to be acknowledged by most rational beings that houses ought to be pretty as well as healthy ; and that houses, even of the humblest class, *may* be pretty as well as healthy. By the Creator's wise arrangement, beauty and art go together ; the prettiest house will be the healthiest, most convenient, and most comfortable. And I am persuaded that great moral results follow from people's houses being pretty as well as healthy. . . . It makes an educated man domestic ; it makes him a lover of neatness and accuracy ; it makes him gentle and amiable (I mean in all but very extreme cases), to give him a pretty home. . . . Taste costs nothing. If you



have a given quantity of building materials to arrange in order, it is just as easy, and just as cheap, to arrange them in a tasteful and graceful order of collocation, as in a tasteless, irritating, offensive, and disgusting one. . . . And in this æsthetic age, when there is a general demand for greater beauty in all physical appliances ; when we are getting rid of the vile old willow pattern ; when bedroom crockery must be of graceful form and embellishment ; when grates and fenders, chairs and couches, window curtains and carpets, oilcloth for lobby floors and paper for covering walls, must all be designed in conformity with the dictates of an elevated taste, it is not too much to hope that the day will come when every human dwelling that shall be built shall be so built and so placed that it shall form a picture pleasant to all men to look at.'

I am quite sure that all things that show what they really are, and do not pretend to be something else, are in the end best and cheapest. It may be said that within the last few years, the public have had little or no chance of getting rid of vulgar designs in wall hangings, curtains, carpets, and furniture, and that, if they wanted to obtain better work, the cost of purchasing real Indian or Persian rugs, or of having furniture designed, was utterly beyond their means ; and with every desire to

see better work in their houses, the knowledge and taste of the manufacturers of the various objects were so limited that they were content to keep to the old patterns, or to put forth others which were equally vulgar and commonplace. For long years we have been content to have the furniture and fittings of our houses unartistic and commonplace, and, as Mr. Eastlake says in his very useful and well-written book on 'Household Taste,' this commonplaceness 'pervaded and vitiated the judgment by which we were accustomed to select and approve the objects of every-day use in our houses. It crossed our path in the Brussels carpet of our drawing-rooms ; it was about our beds in the shape of gaudy chintz ; it compelled us to rest on chairs and sit at tables which were designed in accordance with the worst principles of construction, and invested them with shapes confessedly unpicturesque. It sent us metal work from Birmingham which was as vulgar in form as it was flimsy in execution. It decorated the finest modern porcelain with the most objectionable character of ornament. It lined our walls with silly representations of vegetable life, or with a mass of uninteresting diaper. It bade us, in short, furnish our houses after the same fashion as we dress ourselves, and that is with no more sense of beauty than if art

were a dead letter.' This utter want of taste and general love of meretricious and vulgar show ramified through everything, from the art of architecture to the meanest object of every-day use. What wonder, then, that there was little appreciation of art or taste, or any refinement of culture or feeling, and that, while in other countries, art-manufactures of all kinds were infinitely superior, our own productions were utterly thrown into the shade, and art in domestic life was almost a thing unknown!

In decoration and furniture the great aim of the designer should be simplicity and appropriateness of form and design, with harmony of colour ; and to show that the cheapest and commonest things need not be ugly, and that truth in art and design need not of necessity involve costliness and lavish expenditure. Fitness and absolute truth are essential to all real art, for be it remembered that 'design is not the offspring of idle fancy ; it is the studied result of accumulative observations and delightful habit ;' and by a careful regard to this we may make our homes and habitations, if not absolutely shrines of beauty and good taste, at least pleasant places where the educated eye may look around, without being shocked and offended by some vulgarity and gaudy commonplaceness.

It fell to my lot to have to review very many of the exhibits in the last Paris Exhibition of trades specially cognate to art, and I consequently had to examine more closely than I otherwise should have done into the various articles of every-day use, as to their design, workmanship, and cost ; and I am bound to say that, although there was much that showed enormous progress in art design and skilled workmanship, I found little or nothing which, to my mind, in any way solved the all-important problem of providing really good and artistic furniture at a moderate cost, so that it might be within the reach of all classes of the community. There is no real reason why painted and varnished deal or other soft wood furniture should not be made at a cost within the means of all. Pitch pine or even simple yellow deal, varnished or polished or painted, is capable of being worked into buffets, cabinets, wardrobes, and innumerable other articles of furniture, if properly and simply treated, without carving, or elaborate fretwork cutting, or moulding.

The difficulty nowadays seems to be in designing furniture for ordinary use in simple and appropriate form, strong and serviceable, good in outline and make, but free from unnecessary and incongruous elaboration

and multiplicity of ornamentation, which is as useless as it is expensive.

Of what use or beauty are bookcases plastered over with miniature Gothic buttresses, or finished with elaborately pierced cornices and moulded finials? or wardrobes with panels filled in with expensive carving or fretwork patterns, which are not only utterly out of place, but, under all conditions and circumstances, objectionable as resting-places for dirt and dust? All such articles of furniture should be designed for use, not show : the bookcases as strong simple framework for the storage of books ; wardrobes well made and fitted with carefully arranged nests of shelves and drawers, close fitting and dust proof ; cabinets strongly made and designed to show off, to the best advantage, the things they are intended to contain, not massive with bad ornament and carving, or practically useless with minute niches, circular-shaped ends, or senseless rows of tiny balustrading.

It is no exaggeration to say that in many cases a few pounds will provide strong and serviceable accommodation of much more real use and higher artistic character than is now provided for at six or seven times the amount.

Messrs. Morris and Co. have designed an excellent

arm-chair in stained wood, comfortable, and artistic, although, perhaps, somewhat rough in make, for 9s. 9d. ; and I have seen buffets and bookcases made in deal at the cost of a few pounds which look well, and answer all the purposes for which they are required.

I have given a slight sketch of this chair to show its general character and form. Whatever may be



thought of its artistic merit, it is certainly comfortable for use, pleasant to look at, and cheap in price, it is strongly made of birch wood stained black, with rush bottom and strong arms, and is to my mind fitted for

almost any room : it can be made more comfortable perhaps with a stuffed loose seat at a cost of a few shillings a chair.

This and the simple bedroom chair without arms are both cheap and serviceable.

There are innumerable examples of cotton and



chintz of excellent colouring and pattern which can be bought for a few shillings a yard, and well designed and drawn papers at a mere nominal cost, compared with the expensive French imitation silk and gold examples of a few years back, and plain painted furniture of good form and appropriate design and

arrangement, which can be obtained from almost any really good upholsterer, in place of the more elaborate polished mahogany erections with which we have so long been familiar.

Good Oriental rugs can be purchased for small sums, and, in combination with painted or stained floors or India matting bordering, can be made to cover the floor spaces of our rooms quite as inexpensively as a Brussels or Wilton carpet laid all over the room.

For more than a hundred years, the fashion of furniture, like that of the master art of architecture, has been continually changing, and from time to time we have had works which have either been adapted or imitated from ancient Greek or Roman examples, or in later years have based their form and shape on mediæval specimens, degenerating, as a rule, into vulgar and meretricious commonplaceness, in which seeming quaintness, stiff angularities, and eccentric and uncomfortable cuttings and projections, did duty for the more elaborate, although equally uncomfortable, finishing of the real work. The age of Batty Langley produced furniture as false and meretricious in taste as the rooms it was designed to fill. The later rococo period of *pseudo*-Italian work, in which compo was made to do duty for real stone, and whole rows of



houses were erected in the most approved forms of vulgar commonplaceness, brought back the vulgarity and senseless imitation of the worst period of French upholstery. In still later days arose the fashion of so-called mediæval furniture made to fall in with the revival of Gothic architecture, but based on no real knowledge of the actual specimens of the furniture of the Middle Ages, which, with all its elaborateness and richness of design and materials, and all its gorgeousness of colouring, would be no more suited to the domestic life and habits of the nineteenth century than the cramped and ill-arranged smaller houses of the Middle Ages, as shown by the examples still remaining to us, would be suited to the wants and requirements of present times. If not an age of luxury, the nineteenth century is essentially one of comfort; and the tile-pavements, with sweet scented straw or heath strewn upon them, the divans and wall benches, the ingeniously carved, but withal uncomfortable, chairs and tables, the walls hung with rich carpets or tapestry, are totally unsuited to modern wants and ways of living.

In the eighteenth century the work of the upholsterers in England was much influenced by the designs of Chippendale, Sheraton, Adams, and Pergolesi, and

in these we find, as a rule, general utility and comfort, combined with skill and delicacy in design and excellency of workmanship.

So far, the present fashion of architecture has caused us to hark back to the work of these designers ; and in much of the furniture of the present day their influence is clearly shown.

In furniture, as in almost everything else in the last two centuries, there have been frequent changes of fashion, depending rather upon the caprices than the absolute necessities of society. In early days, when our ancestors were compelled to hold their own by force of arms, to shut themselves up in strongly built and fortified castles, and were of necessity compelled to be ready to flee from the successful raids of hostile forces, the principal furniture consisted of chests ; and many a massive iron-bound box which, although made to defy all attempts to open, must yet, in the days when carriages were of the clumsiest character, have been somewhat hard to move. After these days, to quote M. Jacquemart :—

‘By degrees, as public security increased, and society, growing more condensed, found support in its legal organisation, ease began to develop itself, and with it luxury—that innate want of intelligent races, who require

the satisfaction of the eye in proportion to the enlightenment of the mind. Strictly speaking, therefore, it was not until after the strifes of the Middle Ages that furniture, such as we understand it in our day, could have existed ; that is, an assemblage of objects placed in the principal divisions of habitation, to satisfy the different requirements, and present at the same time an agreeable, elegant, and even splendid appearance.'

It is curious to notice how much furniture, like architecture, speaks in plain language the history of a country ; and as nations increased in wealth and civilisation, the luxury and gorgeousness of their furniture increased ; while the design and form of many of the pieces, to a great extent, marked the customs and forms of the particular people. The 'triclinium' of three seats of the Romans marked the late Oriental fashion of reclining at meals. The ancient Greeks and Romans, moreover, divided their household furniture into various heads : first, the articles devoted to domestic religious sacrifices ; secondly, the ornaments worn on solemn festivals by the women, who in those days were placed immediately after the gods ; and then, in rotation, the sacred robes and military armour of the men, the looms and spinning wheels, cooking utensils, and the various services of plate or porcelain, which were, even as now,

divided into those for general use, and those for grand occasions. The chairs used by the Greeks were elegant in form and graceful in design, and of materials varying in costliness according to the means of the owner ; in the examples shown on ancient gems and bassi-relievi, we see the straight-backed chairs or thrones of their gods, all more or less like the high-backed chairs of the Elizabethan period.

I must be forgiven if, as an architect, I regret that in these days the designing of furniture is, as a rule, handed over to the upholsterer, and that the houses we build are oftentimes filled with articles incongruous in design, bad in taste, and often utterly commonplace and uncomfortable. This criticism does not apply to some of our principal manufacturers, who have striven to lead the public into more artistic thoughts, and have provided for them work which is at once good in design and treatment, graceful and pleasant in form, and finished in the highest possible way, both as regards artistic character and skill of handicraft. But these gentlemen, like other artists, have a cloud of imitators, whose works are set forth as of ' old English,' ' Queen Anne,' or some other special and equally applicable period or fashion, and which, while aiming to be cheap, are equally commonplace and nasty, and are filled with

carvings of the most execrable character, or with some miserable painted daub, bad in drawing and in colour, which is made to do duty as a panel, and is set forth as high art ; and from its gaudiness—or, if you like it better, eccentricity of design—commends itself to those whose taste is not of the highest kind, but whose ambition to possess gaudy finery and something to show off, is great and insatiable.

We, architects, are oftentimes most unfairly blamed for work in which we have had no hand, and are held unjustly liable for the scamping work and, to my mind, criminal faults of bad work and still worse materials, of the ordinary speculative builder, which no existing laws or Building Acts seem capable of preventing. We may be guilty of many sins of omission and commission, but we are not to be blamed, as a rule, for the general tasteless fitting up of the houses we build, or for the glaring anachronisms of taste in the decoration and furniture of the rooms we design.

The various discoveries of the paintings on the walls of buildings at Thebes and neighbouring districts, and at Pompeii and Herculaneum, give us a very fair idea of the furniture of ancient Egypt and Italy. The Egyptians undoubtedly had handsome inlaid seats of various kinds, made of ebony and other rare woods, and

often covered with rich stuffs, sometimes with leather, fancifully decorated. The legs were carved into the semblance of those of animals, and sometimes would seem to be solid and painted with figures of captives, indicating a degrading position. The pillows would seem to have been of wood hollowed for the head; the tables were of all forms, generally circular, as being more social and comfortable; and, so far as we can ascertain, the furniture of ancient Egypt was more or less like that of the present day, while modern Egypt is content to have an Oriental form of arrangement, in which low divans and mats form the principal items.

In the sixteenth century, furniture practically became more solid and less moveable, and from this period dates the designing and making of elaborate inlaid and carved furniture of every description, until, in the time of Louis XIV., was inaugurated, so to speak, an age of pomp and luxurious magnificence in all articles of furniture and decoration, gradually leading, as all such work, as a rule, leads, to the whimsical extravagance and ugliness of form, and to the costliness of metal chasing and elaborately gilt bronze decoration, known generally under the name of its inventor, 'Buhl,' in which, while we cannot but admire the exquisite workmanship and, in many instances, beautiful

and spirited conception and design, there is little of real use or homelike character. In later days, we see a return to the purer work of the Renaissance age, simplicity and delicacy in design and ornament ; and, in the seventeenth century, panels of porcelain of Oriental design and make were largely employed, until, under Louis XVI., the beautiful porcelain *plaques* of Sèvres were substituted for Oriental panels, and the delicate colouring and graceful painting of these, intermingled with exquisite veneerings of various coloured woods, and the finely wrought bronze work, beauteously chased and gilt, worked out with great beauty of design and general harmony of treatment, all tended to create a purer and better taste in the design and character of furniture. About this time too were made many of the marquetry cabinets, in which various woods were skilfully inlaid in endless designs and shapes. All this kind of furniture had in its particular style great beauty and charm, but it was eminently costly ; and, as a rule, all modern imitations lose, from want of skill of handicraft, and power of decorative design and treatment, all character, and are, like the mediæval examples of Wardour Street, things to be avoided rather than encouraged or sought after.

I have thus briefly sketched out the history of

furniture, with no idea of suggesting its influence upon our modern work, in which different necessities and different habits require different treatment ; and, in my future lectures, I propose to offer suggestions for the economical treatment of decoration and furniture, and the adaptation of both to modern necessities, rather than to discuss with what elaborateness and gorgeousness decoration can be carried out, where money is no object.

I shall be satisfied if in the course of the following lectures I may set any of you thinking more about the art decoration and furnishing of your homes than you have done hitherto, and if I can show you that good art is not necessarily costly, nor a mere fashionable plaything, but something which, rightly carried out in every-day life, leads to higher, nobler, and better thoughts.

It has been well written that—

‘ The law of development under which nature perfects her types should also be the law of art, and the error into which revivalists fall is that of going backwards in the order of creation instead of forwards. The one broad line of distinction between Classicists and Gothicists would seem to be that the former seek abstract beauty, an ideal and perfected type, while the



latter seize upon accident, character, and eccentricity. The remedy lies in the more intelligent study of nature.'

The present revival in good hands is working back to truth of construction, boldness of composition and treatment, and strength and grace of drawing. Thus may we hope that styles small and puerile will give place to manners great and manly, and that our English art in decoration and furniture may eventually return to those days in which truth and study of nature, combined with knowledge of use and suitability, were the chief attributes of all good and pure design. And now that the Government is dealing in a measure with the art education of the people, and the knowledge of good and evil in drawing, design, and colouring is being largely disseminated, let us hope that the fine arts, as applied to the internal decoration of our homes, as well as to architecture, sculpture, and painting, may be felt as the higher intellectual agents in fostering and promoting the well-being of man.

## LECTURE II.

## FLOOR, WALL, AND CEILING DECORATION.

IN this second lecture, I purpose to treat generally of floor, wall, and ceiling decoration, and to offer various suggestions for the treatment of the floor and wall surfaces. As, however, I am more especially adapting my remarks to town houses, it will be necessary to remember that, as a rule, the light in the rooms of ordinary town houses is only practically obtained from one end of the room, and as this in the back rooms is generally more or less obstructed by surrounding buildings, that *it is therefore desirable that the general tone of colouring and decoration should be bright and cheerful, so as to neutralise, as much as possible, the prevailing gloom.* In new houses, there will be little or no difficulty in arranging for any kind of floor, wall, or ceiling decoration that you may wish to use, or think most suitable to the character of the house. In existing houses there are, of course, many difficulties to

contend with, if you in any way wish materially to alter the design and character of your flooring, by the use of marble, mosaic, or tile paving, or to alter in any way the existing ceilings of the various rooms, except by mere flat decorative treatment of the original plaster work.

The cutting away of the generally bad plaster enrichments, so as to render the whole ceiling space fitting for the superimposing of more suitable decoration in the way of designed canvas plaster ornamentation, or plaster or wood panelling, must necessarily be somewhat costly. Much may, however, be done, by careful and slight tinting in paint or distemper, and by the general arrangement of stencil decoration, to make the existing ceilings more artistic and in character with the decoration of the walls.

In most town houses the floors of the halls and inner hall are of stone, and any cutting away of this, for the purpose of laying over it any kind of marble or tile pavement, must necessarily be troublesome and costly. The stonework itself, if kept clean and white, will form a very good border for simple Persian or Indian rugs. Although I am no advocate for painting stonework as a rule, I think it will be found desirable to paint all stone margins of halls and staircases in

some warm colour to save the continual labour of cleaning and whitening them; for if thus plainly treated they will necessarily show dirt and damp, much more readily than painted work. Oilcloth and linoleum are generally unsatisfactory; the painted pattern of the one soon becomes unsightly, while the general tone of the latter used in plain colours is unpleasant, the pattern work being liable to wear out in a few years, and, as in oilcloth, to present an untidy and unsatisfactory appearance. It will be found, therefore, much better to paint the stone margins with a soft tone of warm brown or other good wearing colour, and to cover the centre spaces with thick felt drugget or good Indian or Persian rugs, all of which can be obtained at a very moderate cost, may be cheerful in colour and pleasant to the feet, are readily taken up and shaken, and tend to make the usual dismal entrance of a town house look warm and comfortable.

An inexpensive way of adding to the artistic effect of the old stone paving, is to incise in it one or two lines as a border, the lines being of an unequal thickness, and then filled in with coloured cements, or narrow tile slips. The process adopted by Baron Triqueti, in the work executed by him at Windsor, for

Her Majesty the Queen, and called 'Tarsia de Marbre,' consisted of cutting or hatching numerous lines into the marble slab, and filling them in with coloured cements, somewhat after the manner of the well-known pavement in the Cathedral at Sienna ; but the process is not one to be commended, and the result is, from an artistic point of view, when applied to figure decoration for wall surfaces, anything but satisfactory. I see no reason, however, why the inlaying of stone with coloured cements or marble or tile slips, should not be more generally adopted for the pavements of halls and conservatories. Another simple and inexpensive way of treating the old stone paving is to form a large square or diagonal diaper pattern all over it, by means of slightly incised lines, and inserting at the junction of the lines small red or black tiles, so as to form a distinct pattern. All this kind of work can be done very inexpensively, and, to my mind, commends itself to those who are anxious to avoid the everlasting monotony of linoleum or oilcloth, which soon lose their brilliancy, and want renewing in a few years.

Stone pavement thus treated must not, however, be painted, but cleaned and hearth-stoned or pipe-clayed daily, the marble or tile centres being washed

with plain soap and water. Take, for instance, the ordinary outer hall floor of a town house, which may be, say, 12 feet long by 6 feet broad : I would suggest that, instead of covering this with linoleum or oilcloth, you should sink a mat space next the front door of sufficient size to admit of a good-sized serviceable mat, and form the rest of the floor into a pattern by incising it round the outside with a plain simple bordering—the pattern may be elaborated according to the means of the owner—with narrow lines from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide, and filling these in with coloured cements or plain red and buff tile slips, which can readily be procured at any of the well-known tile manufacturers, and covering the centre space with a good rug or mat ; or the whole may be cut into a geometrical pattern.

A more expensive way of improving the old stone paving is by cutting a space, say 12 inches wide, as a border all round, and filling it in with grey, red, and black marble slips, or with a pattern border of marble mosaic, or tile-work. All this kind of work can, of course, be amplified to any extent ; but in any simple way, such as I have suggested, the existing stone floors can be made infinitely more pleasant and artistic, at no greater cost than covering them with oilcloth or linoleum, when it is remembered that the latter want con-

stantly renewing and that the former treatment will last for ever.

Marble mosaic, and plain or encaustic tile paving, have of late years come largely into use, and it is not necessary to enlarge upon the excellence of either of these special ways of paving; but remember always that with tiles, simple designs, and masses of plain colours, red, grey, or buff, are to be preferred to any elaborate patterns, which, as a rule, are anything but artistic, and too often utterly unsatisfactory. In tile pavements it is desirable, especially in the ordinary narrow hall of a town house, to have as broad a treatment of the spaces as possible, and to avoid altogether the all-over patterns, which are published in most of the pattern books laid before the public; not only are these elaborate geometrical patterns unsatisfactory when laid, by destroying the breadth of surface and seemingly diminishing the already too narrow space, but they are infinitely more expensive than plain red 4 or 6 inch tiles laid over the whole space, with a simple border of black or buff. A plain red tile pavement of this kind is infinitely pleasanter, warmer, and more suitable for a town hall, than any of the elaborate patterns which are offered for the public choice, and repeated *ad nauseam*, in oilcloth and linoleum.

In late years there has been a very considerable revival in the work of marble mosaic for pavements. Messrs. Burke and Co., and other manufacturers, have endeavoured to bring this eminently beautiful and artistic work into more general use, by economising, as far as possible, the cost of its production and laying. This kind of pavement is necessarily costly in small spaces, varying from 50s. to 70s. a yard, but when laid the result is most satisfactory. Messrs. Minton and Co., and other manufacturers, make tesserae of burnt earth, with which a somewhat cheaper pavement can be made.

In all this kind of work, it must be remembered that a considerable extra thickness is superimposed upon the existing stone base, and that this must be provided for, either by cutting away the stonework, or in splaying down the new coating to the floors of the rooms. The first procedure is expensive and unsatisfactory, as weakening the constructive flooring; but the splaying off in the door openings can be done so as to in nowise be inconvenient or objectionable, and the expense of cutting away the stonework is thus avoided. Of course, if the floors are of wood, all this expense is avoided by taking up the old flooring and filling in between the joists with concrete or pugging,



and so providing a solid level surface for the new flooring. It is not necessary to enter into the question of the use of mosaic for general decoration, for naturally it hardly suggests itself as suitable for the covering of the internal walls of our houses, and the action of frost and moisture practically prevents its adoption, except when carefully protected, for external work ; moreover, for all absolutely decorative purposes it must necessarily be costly, and its effect at short distances is generally unsatisfactory. Applied to the decoration of large monumental structures, mosaic has been used from the earliest civilised times, and the wondrous beauty of the ancient examples which still remain to us, in mural decoration and pavements, speak better than all words to its interest and durability.

Another and a cheaper way of paving is by the use of what are called marble mosaic tiles ; these tiles are made by pressing a number of various coloured marble chips into a specially prepared cement, either without pattern, as '*misciata*,' or in a pattern ; the tiles when dry being polished, the effect is good and pleasing. The cost varies from 7*s.* 6*d.* per square yard, and if the tiles are used in single colours of red, grey, and black, an effective pavement can be obtained at a small

cost. This material may also be made in large slabs for lining walls, and when polished forms an excellent finish for hall or staircase dados at moderate cost. The mosaic tiles, made by the Mosaic Tile Company, seem specially good in design and moderate in cost. Inlaid cement work for floors ought to be much more encouraged, as a cheap and durable method of simple but effective treatment of plain surfaces.

I need hardly refer to the ordinary covering of a London hall by means of linoleum and oilcloth. I consider both objectionable, and to be avoided as far as possible. Painted oilcloth soon becomes shabby by its pattern being worn through, and, as a rule, this pattern is only an imitation of tile or parquet work, bad in treatment, colouring, and design.

Until quite recently, it has been the fashion to cover the whole of the floors of our reception and bedrooms with drugget or carpet, which, as a rule, was never removed, except at the usual periods of spring and autumn cleaning; and it is hardly necessary, therefore, to object to the system as utterly opposed to all laws of health and cleanliness. Floors thus covered, as a matter of course become the receptacles of dirt and dust, which no amount of brushing can get rid of; and this daily brushing serves only to raise a cloud of

dirt and dust, which settles in part upon every object in the rooms, and in part returns to its original resting-place. It is a matter of astonishment to me, to find that there are still a large number of people who are content to keep this exceedingly bad arrangement of floor covering, and who object altogether to having a certain amount of plain floor space all round the sides of the room. In the first place, this covering of the whole surface is unhealthy ; in the second place, it is dirty ; and, in the third place, the cost of the carpet is infinitely more than the cost of painting or staining the edges of the rooms.

There are many ways of treating the floor surfaces of a room, either in part, or entirely, so as to avoid the necessity of carpeting the whole surface. The cheapest way is to paint, say, a margin of two or three feet wide, all round the room, in four or five coats of dark colour, care being taken that the groundwork throughout is dark, so that scratches shall not show any light colour under, and that sufficient time is allowed for each succeeding coat to harden and dry. Take care also that the floors are painted before being sized, for if size is used before paint or stain, the surface will easily chip and soon become shabby. A square carpet or rug can then be pinned down over the centre space,

and this can be easily taken up once a week and shaken, and the borders can be washed or cleaned every day. New floors can either be treated in this way, or stained, sized, and varnished, or wax polished.

Many of the floors abroad are formed entirely in tiles, laid upon concrete filling-in between the wood joists; but, although clean and healthy, this kind of floor is somewhat cold and dismal, and, unless extremely well laid, the joints are too apt to form receptacles for dirt and dust.

A more expensive way of forming borders is by the use of what is called 'Parquet.' This parquet consists of the fitting together of narrow strips of various hard woods, carefully grooved and tongued, into a pattern; this work is, however, expensive, varying from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per foot superficial, laid, and involves considerable labour and expense in cutting and altering the old floor, unless, of course, the whole surface is covered with parquet, by which means an additional thickness is laid over the original floor surface.

The general effect of this inlaid wood-work is more showy, but I am not prepared to say more artistic, than plain painting, staining and varnishing, or simple oak bordering. Messrs. Arrowsmith, and other well-

known upholsterers, have for many years provided good examples of this kind of work in solid parquet, which must not be confounded with the thin veneering glued down to a common deal backing, which, although practically cheaper, is, to my mind, inferior in quality. Messrs. Howard, of Berners Street, have patented what they call 'carpet parquet.' This is made by machinery, of very thin strips of wood, which are first desiccated, then cut to the required form, and arranged into a pattern, and secured by a canvas backing. The advantage of this is, that it can either be laid as a border or over the entire room, without interfering with the old floor; and if laid as a border, a very ordinary carpet practically fills up the thickness, and the cost, ranging from 6*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per foot superficial, is much in its favour. All parquet work is practically impervious to dust, and therefore naturally conduces to the healthiness of the room, as there are no open joints to collect dust, or what doctors call 'germ seeds' of disease. The simple staining, sizing, and varnishing of floor margins costs about 1*s.* 6*d.* per square yard, but this can only be done effectively on new floors.

In the external decoration of the ordinary brick and cement façades of town houses, I cannot see why a much larger use should not be made of coloured

decoration, or why we cannot apply the teaching of the old northern Italian artists, who covered with distemper decoration the exteriors of their houses. With the many impurities that arise in most towns, from gas and smoke, and sewer exhalations, all of which ought to be preventible, it would be impossible to use distemper or fresco decoration ; but we might surely take from ancient work some few hints for the decorative treatment in paint of plain plaster walls, and so improve the unutterably inartistic and miserable appearance of so many of our modern streets and squares.

We cannot in England expect to have Italian climate or Italian brilliancy of sky or sunlight ; but surely this is all the more reason why we should endeavour to give some colour to the dingy streets, made more dingy by the smoke and other impurities, engendered by the present use, or rather abuse, of coal and gas in most of our towns and cities. Even the stucco palaces of Belgravia and Tyburnia might be made fairly pleasant objects to look at, if relieved with coloured decoration, in some such way as the houses in the Piazza delle Erbe, at Verona, from their dreary monotony of imitation stone colouring, and sickly commonplaceness of Portland cement.

We may almost be grateful to those who first broke

away from the ordinary colour, and painted the exteriors of their houses red or blue, and for the attempt made by Messrs. Jackson and Graham to introduce external coloured decoration in the new Continental Hotel in Waterloo Place. But even plain painting is better than the vulgar and ignorant arrangement of colours, which is occasionally to be seen in our modern streets, wherein flaming contrasts of colouring are put forth without any harmony or design ; we might with advantage study the drawings of the very simple, but withal beautiful and harmonious, colouring of some of the simple 'secco' decoration of the Egyptian tombs or the 'fresco' paintings on the walls of Pompeii : whatever we may think of the art work in these buildings, we may accept the simple and harmonious rendering of plain colours on flat wall surfaces, as nearly always good and satisfactory ; a few simple colours judiciously treated in the flat surfaces and cornices of the usual cement-fronted houses, would render them, if not highly artistic, at all events infinitely more pleasant to look upon, and break the dreary outlook which is presented by the everlasting rows of grey-tinted fronts ; good stencil decoration in paint might well be introduced on some of the flat surfaces, and even figure decoration in panels could be done at a moderate cost, if treated simply in

**outline.** An ordinary cement-fronted house could be made fairly attractive if painted in simple tones of light red, black, and white, with here and there lines or stencil patterns of cobalt, yellow ochre, or green, properly arranged.

I do not see why we should have **all** our houses dingy, as well as bad in architectural design. The speculative builder has provided us with all that is filthy and objectionable in the way of building and design ; we, if we like, can do something, without any great outlay of money, to neutralise this, by judicious use of colour in some of the monotonous lines of cornices and wall faces, instead of always adhering to the dreariness and dismal commonplaceness of grey and stone colour. It is lamentable that, in these days of so-called high art, there cannot be formed some School of Decorative Artists, to whom those who desire something more artistic in design and colouring can go, and by whom the advising as to the simple decoration of the external face of an ordinary house need not be a thing to be lightly treated.

The palaces of Venice and the cinque-cento churches throughout Italy, show how marvellously the use of marble, even in small panels, brightens up and relieves the surface of a flat dull wall. Marble has



been largely employed in many well-known ancient buildings for surface decoration, and a few *plaques* of bright-coloured marble unpolished, inserted as panels in our street fronts, would do something to lighten up and break the present dulness, at a comparatively small outlay.

Architects get the credit of being the authors of innumerable bad works ; but we are not responsible for the vulgar, tasteless erections of the last twenty years, which make up the streets and squares of the greater part of fashionable, modern London. No wonder that London is the dingiest, the dreariest, and the ugliest city in the world ; no wonder that all artistic feeling is crushed, when we see the endless rows of cement-covered houses, of hideous outline and commonplace design, left grey, in all the shabbiness of Portland cement, or blossoming out in triennial springtides of fresh paint, which whitewash for a while the tasteless vulgarity of our street façades.

It would seem that the architect and the painter are not in accord ; that there is a want of that proper sympathy and art brotherhood, which, in olden days, made men think nothing too insignificant to work upon, the painting of a great decorative picture, the figure decoration of a noble hall, the painting of arabesque on

walls, or the tinting of outside plaster work. Why should this want of sympathy exist?

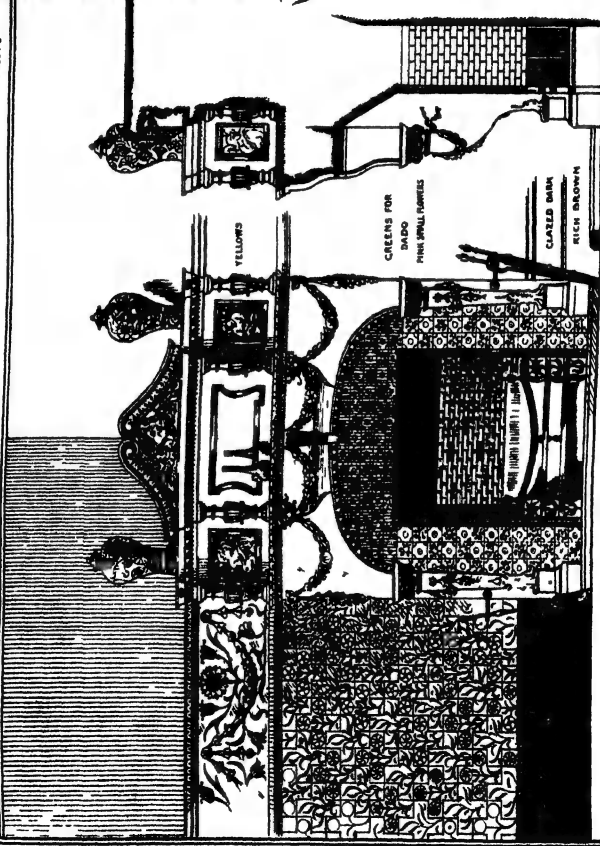
I am quite certain that amongst all good architects there is a strong desire to bring into their work the work of the painter, and to associate with their building, in goodly and pleasant fellowship, the work of the sculptor and the painter.

I see no reason why the skill and thought of the architect and decorator should not be employed in making the general run of commonplace street architecture pleasanter to look at by means of coloured decoration, lightly, simply, and economically treated, or by the use of glazed terra-cotta in a variety of colours.

A new kind of architectural *faience*, 'Burmantofts,' has lately been brought prominently before the public by Messrs. Wilcock and Co., of Leeds, and seems well adapted for the use of external and internal wall decoration; it is made out of a very fine quality of fire-clay, composed of almost pure silica and alumina, will resist intense heat, and is therefore well adapted for fire-places and stoves, and the manufacturers seem to be aiming to produce work of good artistic merit, by employing skilled artists in the design and modelling, and thus avoiding the generally hard and unartistic effect of



An Angle Fire Place & Mantel Piece in Burmantofts Fience.  
designed by MAURICE B ADAMS A RISA ARCHITECT  
WILCOCK & COMPANY



MAURICE B ADAMS RISA

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

Detail of Fience. D. 100.

purely machine-made work. The clay, when modelled to its required form, is subjected to great heat and afterwards finished with a coloured and glazed surface in the usual manner. The various glazes and colours used are all metallic oxides, which, being completely saturated into the skin or surface of the clay, by being fused at great heat, unite thoroughly with the silica in the clay, and thus secure a surface that will resist all atmospheric effects, so that the material may well be adopted for any external decoration. In Plate I. I give an illustration of a small angle fire-place and dado, designed by Mr. Maurice B. Adams, as suggestive of the purposes for which the material may be adapted in internal decoration: the cost of a dado such as that shown in the drawing would be about 35s. a square yard, or about the price of an ornamental panelled and carved dado in American walnut or wainscot. For the lining of halls, bath-rooms, or staircases, or for external work, the material seems well adapted, while the various tones of colouring with which it may be treated, and its strongly glazed surface, render it not only an artistic but a cleanly material for all such purposes.

Why cannot we learn a lesson from the treatment of some of the external façades in the street of

nations in the late Paris Exhibition, and adapt majolica ware and *faïence* to the external decoration of our houses ?

The money spent on a piece of *bric-à-brac* or an ordinary water-colour painting, if judiciously laid out, would provide for the decoration, in good glazed terracotta or tile-work, of the entrance door of a house ; and, with a little thought and a moderate outlay, the miserable skeletons of London street houses might be vivified and brought into, at least, some semblance of pleasant life and colour.

Fresco decoration in distemper is out of the question ; but painted pottery, glazed terracotta, mosaic, and even enamelled iron may, rightly treated, be well fitted to give colour and even beauty to our London streets ; and such work would not suffer by smoke or atmospheric influences, and would be freshened and cleaned by each shower of rain, and made brighter by each breath of wind.

Internally, there are naturally very many ways for the decorative treatment of the wall spaces ; but, as I purpose in my future lectures to offer suggestions for the special treatment of the walls of various rooms, I shall at present confine my remarks generally to the materials which may be used. Chief, perhaps, amongst

the various ways of covering the walls of rooms in the Elizabethan age, was by hangings of tapestry or arras. These, as a rule, were simply hung upon the walls, and where, as very frequently in earlier days, these were of brick or stone, not plastered, the heavy tapestry, hung to tenter hooks, at once hid the rough work under, and gave warmth and comfort to the cold and cheerless walls, and were easily taken down and stowed away. Another way of covering the walls was with painted cloth, or canvas, painted with various subjects, devices, and mottoes. The elaboration of this kind of hanging was taken up by the French, and more recently introduced into this country, in the way of straining damask, satin, silk, or other material over the wall surfaces, either entirely covering the wall or arranged in panels by mouldings. All this kind of work, however charming in itself, is to my mind essentially out of place in ordinary town rooms. Tapestry is gloomy and holds dust, and silk and satin are too delicate to stand the smoke and dirt of town atmospheres. Anything that holds dust is essentially out of place on the walls of our rooms, and, no matter how picturesque the general effect of good tapestry, it would be utterly out of place in the permanent decoration of the wall surfaces of our houses ; but I see no reason why good

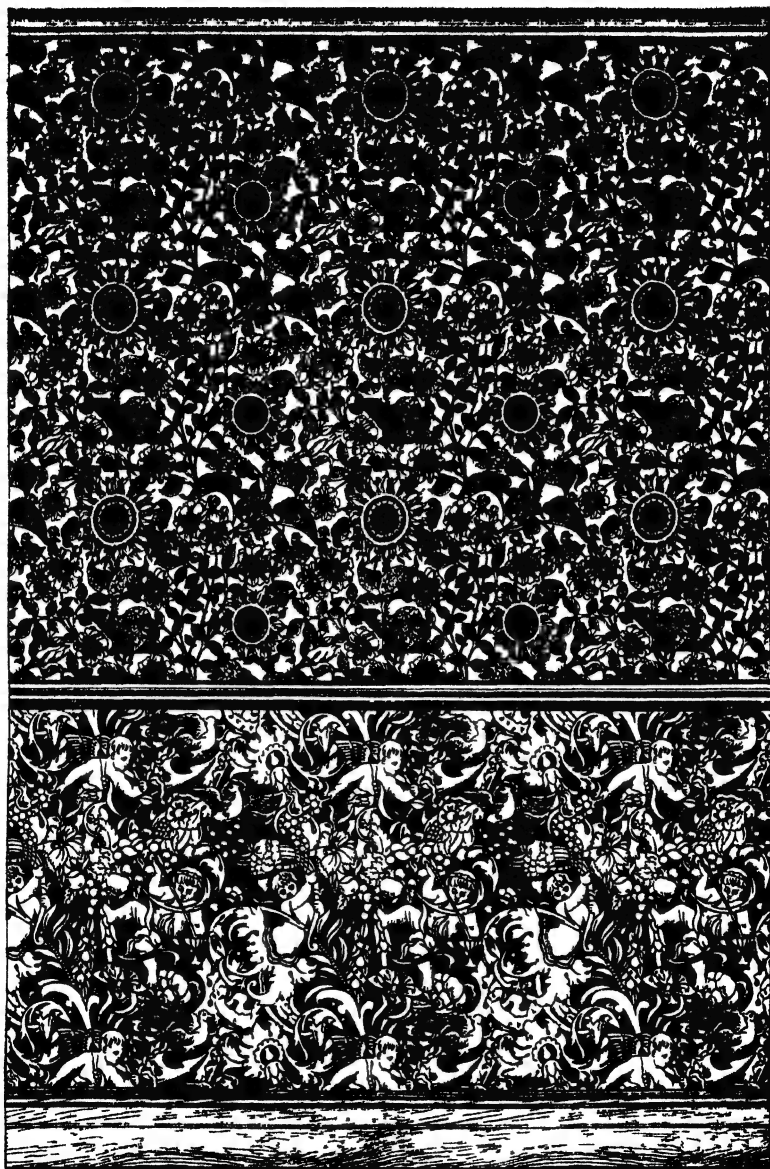
pieces of old tapestry should not be strained and hung on the walls of the halls or staircases as pictures, or any other objects of art, so long as they are moveable and easily shifted for cleaning purposes.

I confess my own views are, that anything that, by its surface, collects and holds dust, is to be carefully avoided in all wall decoration in town houses, and for these reasons all flock-papers, as well as those stamped in relief, are, as a rule, to be avoided except for ceiling or frieze decoration. Some of the better class of double flock-papers—for instance, such a one as the exquisite sunflower pattern designed by Mr. Talbert, and made by Messrs. Jeffrey—are admirably adapted for a dining-room, when a high wood panelled dado is used, and the paper surface is limited; this paper is sufficiently decorative by itself, but is also admirably adapted, by its tone of colouring, for pictures or engravings.

The illustration (Plate II.) shows an arrangement of this sunflower paper for the general wall surface, with a dado of paper stamped in imitation of leather. Both these papers are not only exceedingly beautiful in design and general tone of colouring, but are also of the highest order of workmanship and manufacture; the flock-paper is raised in different thicknesses and



Plate N° 2.





finished in different tones, so as to present perfect harmony of colouring, the general effect being of a golden olive tone: the ground work of light olive green, with greenish-yellow sunflowers and darker green leaves, is all carefully blended and exceedingly well grouped. Such a paper as this, involving great skill and labour in its manufacture, is necessarily costly, and its woolly raised or flock surface naturally forms a ground for collecting dust, and is not therefore to be recommended for town houses; but the same pattern in plain distemper colours, although not so artistic or good in its general effect, is much more moderate in cost, and well adapted for the walls of a dining-room or library. The stamped dado paper is an adaptation of an old Venetian leather design, in part remodelled to suit the requirements of a paper hanging, and being finished to a soft golden bronze tone of colouring, forms an exceedingly effective and handsome base for a dining-room wall decoration: the thick paper of which it is made is specially prepared, so as not to crack or break with stamping, and is lacquered, painted, and gilded, in all other respects after the manner of old Venetian leather, except that Dutch metal is largely used in place of silver, the metal being varnished over with lacquer, so that the surface may

not in any way be effected by atmospheric changes or impurities of gas or smoke.

The present French system of panelling the rooms with elaborate framework of intricate mouldings and carvings, and filling in the panels with silk or paper, is certainly not adapted for town rooms ; the carvings and mouldings hold dirt, require constantly cleaning, and are extravagant and costly, nor do I think the effect in any way satisfactory, except in very large reception rooms.

Any system of panelling the general surfaces of walls of an ordinary town room, will be found inconvenient and unsuitable for hanging pictures, and otherwise decorating the walls, as it necessarily requires everything to be equally arranged and fixed in the centres of the panels, or in the dividing spaces, and it seems absurd to hang a picture on a small scale in a panel of great size. In the great houses and halls, where large full-length ancestral portraits filled up nearly the whole space, the arrangement had fewer objections, more especially as it formed part of the general construction of the rooms, the great mantel being designed with it, the whole finished with skilfully designed cornices, and ceilings with flat mouldings, worked into elaborate or simple panelling.

Of course this kind of work in large rooms is expensive, and, unless the general furnishing be on an equal scale, incongruous and absurd.

Embossed leather was largely used in the Elizabethan age for wall hangings, but this is exceedingly difficult and costly to obtain; where used, it may be formed into a high dado, with a plain deal moulding over, or divided into small dado panels, where the ornament or pattern will admit of it. The papers stamped after the manner of leather, by Messrs. Jeffrey, similar to the one shown in Plate II., are exceedingly good in design, and fairly inexpensive.

Mr. Walton, of Sunbury, has invented a new kind of material for wall decoration, which he calls 'Muralis.' This is said to have the merit of being strong and moderately inexpensive. It is practically linoleum lined with canvas, that it may be fitted up against the wall and ceiling, and is a mixture of linseed oil and fibre rolled on to a fabric, and afterwards stamped by machinery with ornamentation in relief. The specimens I have seen are artistic in their design, the stamping being clear and sharp, the effect being more like very delicate low relief carving or plaster stamping. The especial merits claimed for it are its warm and comfortable appearance; that it does not absorb

moisture, and offers an impermeable resistance to wet from within or without ; it can either be put up for dados, or may be used as a decorative frieze, and painted to any colour to suit the general tone of the room, especially as it can be put along the whole length of a wall without being jointed ; it can be used in the panels of doors or ceilings, and the cost is moderate, some of the best patterns for dado work about 2 feet high being sold for about 3s. a yard. There are many other materials which can be adopted for wall decoration, more especially in the lower portion of the walls, where the room is unequally divided by a high or low dado.

Good tiles can be used in panels in the walls of halls, with painted figures, or other decorative subjects ; but pray do not encourage the use of rough, unevenly burnt tiles, by which the subject painting is generally utterly ruined or seriously damaged. To suppose that this roughness and irregularity give an air of age, is simply ridiculous ; and if it did, it would be setting forth a lie, and be as bad in taste as it is in appearance. I take it, that had our forefathers been able to make tiles as well as we make them now, they would have done so ; and it seems to me gross affectation to copy imperfections of any kind.





TILE DECORATION FOR WALL OR FIREPLACE



DESIGNED BY G F MALINS



In Plate IV. I give two panels of tile decoration designed by Mr. G. F. Malins, which are good and artistic in treatment. The designs are drawn in plain outline of strong brownish tone on lightly tinted tiles, and the ornament slightly stained or coloured; the general effect is good, and the cost, about 30s. a panel, exceedingly moderate. Panels such as these may be used to advantage in internal wall decoration, or for the lining of the sides of fire-places.

Messrs. Howard have a cheap way of forming wood dados, by gluing on to the wall what they call wood tapestry, which is really only a kind of veneering. This kind of work may be fairly adapted where there is no chance of damp; but I should prefer to see a simple deal painted dado, rather than this wood veneering, which, to my mind, partakes too much of the character of sham to be altogether satisfactory.

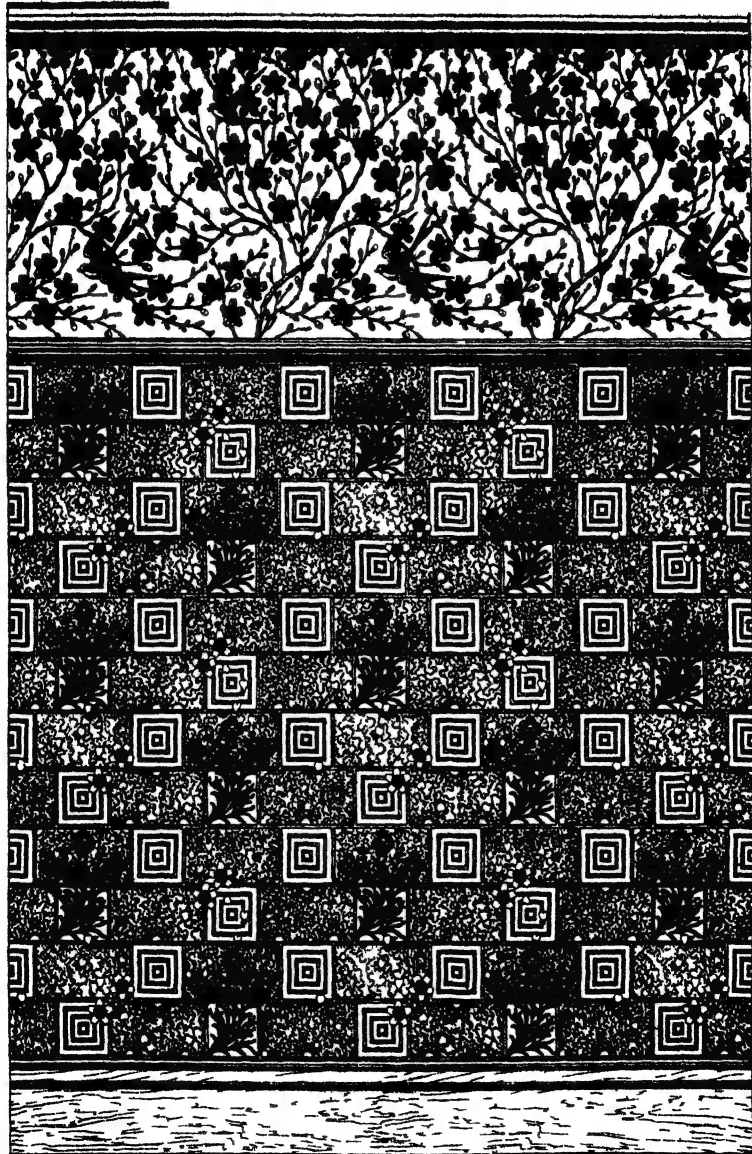
In small drawing-rooms, where expense is an object, India or Manilla matting may very well be used as a dado; it is clean, and, thus arranged, fairly lasting. But the use of all these various materials must necessarily depend upon the means at the artist's disposal, and I shall more especially allude to them in the examples which I propose to give in my

fourth and fifth lectures, for the decoration of special rooms. After all, most of us will have to be content with the more recent invention of paper-hangings for the decoration of our rooms ; and, thanks to Messrs. Jeffrey, Messrs Crace, Messrs Morris, and other manufacturers, there is now no difficulty in obtaining good artistic paper-hangings of good quality, and at moderate cost. The designs of these firms are of the highest possible excellence as regards drawing and design, and the colouring and workmanship are as good as they can be.

Naturally, papers vary very much in their cost, according to the character, but the pattern-books of any good firm of paper-makers will show that the cheapest papers may be as equally good in artistic design as the more elaborate specimens. In the cheapest form of hangings the paper is printed by machinery—that is to say, all the colours are printed at one time either on self-toned paper, as it comes from the manufacturer, or which receives a general coloured ground ;—the prices of these vary from 1s. to 3s. per piece, according to the thickness of the paper used.

Plate III. shows an illustration of a good and effective design by Mr. Walter Crane, made by Messrs. Jeffrey & Co., for a paper suited for the

Plate N° 3.





general wall decoration of an inner hall or staircase, the surface being clearly defined in drawing, and at the same time well covered with simple artistic ornament. The general tone is a warm creamy yellow, with wall-flower pattern diaper of golden brown, in harmony with the yellow ground; the whole brightened up by the powdering over of the pale pinkish-toned petals or leaves, falling, as it were, from the sprays of almond flowers in the frieze. This frieze with its delicate blue ground and well-coloured sprays, with swallows flitting in and out, forms an exceedingly good contrast with the lower paper, when divided by a simple painted deal moulding or picture rail, painted golden brown and varnished, as suggested in the illustration. The lower paper must of course be hung square, and not raking with the lines of the staircase; but there is no reason why the picture rail should not follow the slope of the staircase, and the top space be filled in with the frieze paper, as shown.

The block-printed papers necessarily are more expensive, as they demand much greater skill and knowledge on the part of the workmen, each colour being printed separately. In all of these papers, gold, so called, can be introduced, the cheaper quality being done in powdered metal or gold size; in the more

expensive papers gold-leaf is used, by which a much greater brilliancy is obtained ; but, even at its best, gold on paper-hangings in rooms exposed to the usual filthy gas of most English towns, and to the humid atmosphere of our climate, is never satisfactory, it loses its brilliancy in a few years ; and in newly built houses, and on walls where there is any draught or damp, it will not stand for any length of time. Some of the raised flock-papers and plain raised patterns of Messrs. Jeffrey are exceedingly good in artistic treatment and colouring, and are eminently adapted for ceiling decoration, either as an entire covering or in panels, with slight wood enframing mouldings, and for simple decorative friezes. A very good effect may be obtained with the pattern flock-papers on gilding, lacquered over like the old Venetian work ; this produces a much richer metallic effect, and the gold is, to a certain extent, protected from tarnishing. White flock-papers, on a light ground, look well for ceiling decoration, without painting, and can afterwards, when dirty, be painted to any tone of colour. Amongst the numerous examples of flock-papers made by the firm I have mentioned, there is one in Adams's style of decoration, in white, red, or celadon green ground, which is especially successful in treatment. The one advantage of flock-paper in

decoration is that the flock, being all wool, can be dyed or stained in any colour, and has much greater softness of tone and colouring than other papers. With the great and varied selections of high artistic paper-hangings, such as those made by many of our best manufacturers, and which may be obtained at any good decorators from 1s. to 70s. a piece, there should be no difficulty in selecting some good design. It is gratifying to find that high-class manufacturers like these, in association with good artist designers, are seeking to prove to the public that paper-hangings of high artistic merit, both in design and colouring, may be made to beautify our houses, without going to France for designs, and without slavishly copying ancient patterns and ancient examples. Amongst the patterns now made, there are many which may fairly be accepted as decoration complete, while others are more adapted to form the background for pictures and engravings.

I can only regret that it should be necessary, even with good manufacturers, to issue new patterns each year; as artists, their aim should be to combat the shifty nature of a public who will always demand change if they can get it, and will seek for a new fashion in paper as they do in dress; but if this

constant change and desire of novelty is to be gratified, it behoves the manufacturer to take heed that his novelties should mean progress—not mere change—and that each new design shall, if possible, be better in arrangement, better in colouring, and more beautiful in decorative treatment, so that the public who crave after change shall be educated, by each new novelty in paper-hanging, to a higher standard of excellence and beauty ; and thus imperceptibly the art education of the people will be increased and elevated.

Remember always, as Mr. Owen Jones, speaking of paper-hangings, in his lecture on the ‘ True and the False in Art,’ justly says, that ‘ One of the first principles to be attended to in adorning the walls of an apartment, is that nothing should disturb their flatness,’ and that ‘ all direct representations of natural objects should be avoided ; first, because it places these objects in unseemly positions ; secondly, because it is customary in almost every apartment to suspend on the walls pictures, engravings, or other ornamental works, and that, therefore, the paper should serve as a background, and nothing on it should be offensive or advancing to the eyes. . . . When varieties of colours are used, the Oriental rule of interweaving the form and colour, so that they may present a neutralised



bloom when viewed at a distance, should never be departed from.'

It is a somewhat difficult matter in most town houses, where the ceilings are generally plain, and bordered by cornices of inferior design, to treat them with any amount of colour. In houses of the date of Adams, the ceilings have generally some very delicate enrichments all over them, either flowing or arranged in patterns very slightly raised. Whenever these occur, it is well to treat them almost like Wedgwood ware, with, say, light tones of pink, green, grey, or buff, in very delicate tinting ; but where the ceiling is quite flat, it is desirable to tint it a light tone of grey or cream colour, to get rid of the extreme glare of pure white. Next, the cornice, a simple distemper pattern, of a darker shade of the same colour, will often be found effective and useful, or one or two simple lines with stencilled corners. The tinting of the cornices must materially depend upon their design and contour ; if plain moulded cornices, they may be tinted in one or two shades, the lighter tones being always at the top or next the ceiling, and gradually darkening off to the wall decoration. As a general rule, one or two of the tints of the general groundwork of the paper may be used with effect ; if, however, the cornices contain the

usual ill-designed and modelled plaster enrichments, care should be taken to keep them in the background, and to pick them out as little as possible, so as to avoid making their general badness of form and execution too prominent. It is well to remember a few general rules in decoration of ceilings and cornices, on which to rely when choosing colours or tints. For instance, in using what are called primary colours on moulded surfaces, it is well to understand that yellow increases, while blue diminishes in strength ; the former should, therefore, be used on convex, and the latter on concave, mouldings. All strong colours should be definitely separated from each other by light lines, fillets, or small mouldings ; colours on light grounds appear darker by contrast, while those on dark grounds appear, as a rule, lighter. If the cornice presents any broad, flat surfaces, a simple conventional flower or geometrical pattern can often be used to great advantage, care being taken not to make it too prominent ; the great aim being to keep the general work subservient, and in no way to form a dark moulded frame for the mass of light ceiling. The ordinary system of stencil decoration can be carried out at a very small expense, and, with a few good patterns, very good effect can be obtained in ceilings, where, generally,

little or nothing is done ; nor is it a very costly matter to lay on to the flat ceiling small deal mouldings formed into panels, and painted, with the panels filled in with some very light diaper or pattern flock-paper, or stencil enrichment.

Michael Angelo, Domenichino, Vasari, and other artists, covered their ceilings with painting and fresco, beautiful in themselves, but tiring to those who have to look long at them. Michael Angelo, much against his will, it is said, painted in elaborate decoration the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel ; but Giotto, who knew thoroughly well how to decorate, declined generally to waste his work where it was, at its best, but difficult to see ; and in the ceiling of the Arena Chapel we find only a plain light tint of pale blue, contrasting well with his fresco decoration on the walls.

In French ceilings we find many graceful enrichments, especially those designed by Le Pâtre, from whom Inigo Jones probably took many of his ideas and thoughts ; afterwards Vanbrugh and Gibbs followed with work of similar character, until the perfection of this kind of cast enrichment was attained by Athenian Stewart and the brothers Adam, whose delicate detail and fanciful and flowing treatment of design may yet be seen in some of the old houses of

London, and are all worthy of study in all plaster decoration.

*Carton pierre* and canvas plaster are both of French origin, but have recently been largely introduced into this country by Messrs. Jackson and Son, of Rathbone Place, and are well adapted for general ceiling decoration, as both can be laid on the existing plaster work. Good decoration can be obtained, at moderate cost, by the use of canvas-plaster work in low relief patterns, either made to cover the whole ceiling, or in panels, with low flat mouldings, similar to those in many of the old houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the material is specially fitted for boldly relieved work in decorative friezes, a good effect being obtained by treating the background in delicate tones of grey, or green, or golden yellow, and leaving the enrichment white.

Just eighteen centuries ago, within the ancient streets of Pompeii might have been seen the luxury and splendour of art form and colour as applied to house decoration. And if we cannot always accept the art work as the best of its kind, it must be remembered that Pompeii was but a second-class town, and so could not probably, in its school of art workmen, command the highest excellence in design or painting; yet

we may learn from the illustrations of the general decorative treatment of its houses, both externally and internally, much that might well be applied to modern houses in our own day. The excavations which have from time to time been carried on during the last half-century, have brought to light marvellous specimens of mosaic and fresco decorations, all showing great skill and knowledge of grouping and composition, and admirable arrangement of light and shade. The examples of friezes, of terra-cotta, and elaborate plaster bas-relief, and fresco decoration, of great beauty and richness, might surely teach us something of decorative art, and from these examples of brilliant colouring and graceful ornamentation, we might do well, to a certain extent, to accept some hints for their future adaptation or imitation, externally and internally, in our ordinary street houses. Let me not be mistaken in the word 'imitation'; I do not mean that we are to copy in our house decoration and ornamentation, examples of work which express only designs from heathen mythology or stories of life peculiar to an age of luxury, not always moral or in accordance with present taste; but in the graceful drawing of ornamental borders, in the careful rendering of bright and delicate colouring, and in the general treatment of decorative design in plaster

work, we may learn many valuable lessons which may help us in our own day and generation.

But here the lesson ceases ; we do not want nowadays stories of heathen mythology, or representations of Greek or Roman legends, with which we have little or no sympathy ; we may well be sick of processional pictures, representing the scenes of bygone ages, and of endless arrays of nymphs and heathen gods and goddesses, whose lives suggest subjects and scenes not always delicate or pure.

I see no reason why, in the houses of the present, we should not have art decoration setting forth some well-known events in the history of the country—stories telling us of the nobility and greatness of those who have helped to make our country the great country that it is.

Why should not painters teach us peace, and good will, and charity, instead of the everlasting nonsense of the ‘Judgment of Paris,’ or the ‘Rape of the Sabinés,’ and, in simple decorative work, in good drawing and well-arranged colouring, help to make our walls beautiful to look at, and examples of art decoration, which shall hold its own with any decoration of past ages.

In the examples still left to us of Pompeiian work,

we cannot but notice the great elegance of outline and colouring treated with a master hand, without violent or exaggerated contrasts of light and shade.

Allegory may sometimes be charming, and teach us some real truth, but surely this kind of subterfuge is out of place in the decoration of houses in this nineteenth century, where, at least, common sense overrides romance, and truth, and beauty of subject and form, should take the place of sickly sentimentalism in design and treatment.

Hogarth and Cruikshank have given us caricatures, some of which, at their best, are neither pleasant in their treatment nor altogether honest in their rendering, and which, even if true, set forth scenes which are wanting in refinement and delicacy, and show us the worst and most brutal side of human nature. Both men were artists of the highest kind, but both, to my mind, failed in their caricatures generally from the overcoarseness and exaggeration of their designs. If art is worth having at all, it should be beautiful, and portray grace and beauty of thought and colouring, with subjects emphasising the better life that is in us, and not, like the mawkish novels of the day, pandering to the tastes of those whose thoughts would seem to be in licence and indelicacy, or which nauseate us with

all the gross exaggeration and detail of vulgar show or gross profanity.

The President of the Royal Academy, Sir Frederick Leighton, Mr. Marks, R.A., Mr. Poynter, R.A., Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Albert Moore, and other well-known painters, have shown us what can be done in decorative work ; and although much of the work done by these painters has been in the ornamentation of monumental work, rather than in the interiors of ordinary rooms, they have shown us that there are painters in the present day who can do work of the highest character of design and decoration. In Mr. Marks' work we have quaint and humorous examples of good decorative treatment adapted for humble requirements and humble means.

For us, it is perhaps unfortunate that the greater inducement of painting easel pictures should prevent such men as these giving more time to decorative work ; we can only hope that with the increased demand for and delight in real art work in our houses, ere long a school may be founded of young artists who will, at fairly moderate cost, be willing and glad to do purely decorative work.

I see no reason why the question which was asked in an article in a late number of the 'Nineteenth



Century,' 'Is a great School of Art possible in the present day?' should not be answered in the affirmative, and I believe that to a great extent the conditions and view of present life are 'such' (to use Mr. Watts' own words) 'as might fairly encourage and create a school—a group of painters, sculptors, and architects, whose work collectively should have a force marking the age in which they live, becoming part of the history of the country to which they belong, and existing in the future as a lasting monument of the best feelings and thoughts of the present time.'

There is, I fear, at present, among artists a want of that true sympathy in each other's work, and of that appreciation of and respect for each other's talent, which alone can lead to true association of labour and fraternity of toil.

Art decoration is, as a rule, treated as easel picture work, with figures modelled and rounded, and with landscapes and perspective drawing and modelling, utterly at variance with true decorative work. I do not suppose that any painter of eminence could afford to paint decoration, if the work is to be entirely of his own hand; but I see no reason why the master hand should not, with pleasure and profit to himself and those associated with him, and in conjunction with the

architect, design and complete good and artistic decoration at a fairly moderate cost.

The master's work should consist, in conjunction with the architect, in designing the general scheme, in adding such touches and drawing as may be necessary to the work when drawn at large on the wall or canvas, and in generally superintending its proper filling in, colouring, and finishing, always remembering that true decoration for walls and ceilings consists in good general arrangement and grouping of figures and foliage, and in broad flat treatment, so that the general effect of the work, when finished, may depend upon good drawing, graceful arrangement, and simple harmonious colouring, rather than on laboured minuteness of detail or elaboration of finish.

It too often happens that when a painter works at decorative work, he draws and completes it in his studio, seeing nothing of the surroundings and proportion of the room for which the work is intended, and to him it becomes more or less an easel picture, to be looked at always on the eye line, and is laboured and finished in strength of colour and detail, utterly unnecessary, and when placed on the wall the effect is unsatisfactory, and either the work itself, or the general decoration of the room, has to be toned down in order

to secure that harmony of colouring and treatment so necessary for all good artistic decoration.

I am sanguine enough to believe that art decoration can be done well, and at a cost within all our means, and, at the same time, to the pleasure and profit of every one connected. I see no reason why our best painters should not help us in the revival of decorative work in the real artistic painting of the rooms we live in, and the houses we dwell in, even as Fra Angelico, Giotto, Corregio, Michael Angelo, and many other great masters did in days gone by. Why should not our rooms contain life stories of noble deeds, of good works, of home scenes, such as would appeal to the better life that is in all of us, and remind us of some good work, some noble truth? Why should we not set forth on our walls some of the scenes from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Tennyson, or other poets? Surely they would furnish us with ample variety of subject grave or gay, and the lessons and home truths would be made more intelligible and more beautiful by pictorial representation.

‘You will say that this is all very well for family houses which are handed down from father to son, and in which the art so produced is a part of the inheritance; but even in the every-day houses of town

in which we rest to-day and are gone to-morrow, some such work can be done on panel or canvas, and remain as much our own property as the pictures or drawings that we hang on the walls. One such decorative subject, done under the supervision of a good painter, is worth all the prettiness of decorative work in gold and colour, or all the bad ornament of conventional form which money can buy, or mere decorators can design for you ; and one such work of pure decorative art will give more pleasure than all the stamped leather or *bric-à-brac* with which so many of us delight to load our walls. It is better to have a room decorated by the hand of a master, than all the industrious pattern work which hands can make ; for if ‘life without industry is guilt,’ ‘industry without art is brutality.’

I believe there are many amongst our younger painters who would gladly help us in our work, and it is well to remember that the fame and the honour of many of the great masters of olden days rest more upon the purely decorative work they left behind them, than on any amount of easel pictures ; that the frescoes they painted are, after long centuries, still left to us to study and admire, when the mere moveable canvases are lost or destroyed.

It would perhaps be impertinent for me to suggest

that the Royal Academy might do something towards providing for and fostering a school of decorative painting, but I venture to think that they, with all their great wealth and power, could do more than any private individual towards providing for a real and national school of decorative painting; their students would be continually adding new blood, and from a mere business point of view the younger painters would find, that not only money, but fame and reputation, would be equally well attained by decorative work, as by painting easel pictures, or illustrating books or newspapers, and thus eventually we should be able to obtain, at moderate cost, a higher character of artistic decoration throughout the country, and to bring art work within the reach of thousands, where at present it is only to be obtained by those with whom price is no object.

It is all nonsense saying that this kind of work is for the tradesman decorator, and not for the artist himself. I take it the selling of a picture is as much a matter of business, as much a matter of profit and loss, as any other work of human brain and hand. The artist is, or should be, as much a man of business as any other good member of society, and it is a misfortune to himself and his clients when he is not; and

as a mere matter of business, he may, if he will, find it worth his while to dedicate, in part, the thoughts of his fertile brain and the work of his facile hand and brush to decorative design for every-day homes, instead of confining himself to the narrow arena of his own particular studio, and seeing no further than the subject of one particular canvas, confined within the limits of the frame that surrounds it.

I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Marks, R.A., who, some ten years ago, was good enough to paint the decorative figure friezes in my own house, for taking up this subject in a business-like and tangible manner, and to show his approval of what I have for years been advocating, by doing what he called two or three 'show cards' to illustrate this portion of my lecture. The sketch of one of these forms the subject of the illustration Plate V., and I submit is an admirable example of what simple decorative work in the hands of a master may be. It consists of treatment of birds and foliage in oil or tempora, worked out in a naturalistic form in a purely decorative manner of treatment. The general scheme of colouring is intended to be blue, delicate pink, grey and green, as rendered by the sky, the birds—flamingoes—the stonework, and the plants. The blue would be repeated in a deeper tone in the

Plate No 5.



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FLAMINGOES.

ANTO STATIONER'S HALL





pots, and of course the colouring might be varied or altered to suit the tone of the general decoration of the room. This is of course only suggestive, and may be amplified or simplified to any extent, either in combination with figure work, which adds to the cost, or without it. The panel was designed by the master hand, but generally enlarged and carried out from the sketch by young students under the supervision of the master ; and in this spirit of true association of master and student a highly satisfactory result, to my mind, has been obtained, namely, good art combined with moderation of cost.

There are innumerable other birds which form excellent subjects for frieze decoration, and which can be treated naturally, in combination with simple foliage and artistic arrangement of pots and flowers, so as to form an exceedingly beautiful decoration for the upper part of the walls of a dining- or drawing-room, or lady's boudoir ; and are, if well drawn and coloured, eminently adapted for all decorative work. Amongst others I may mention some of those which formed the subjects of an admirable series of decorative panels, lately completed by Mr. Marks for the Duke of Westminster ; namely, the scarlet ibis, various kinds of cranes, gulls and herons, cockatoos and other

tropical and bright-plumaged birds, with swallows and various other small birds common to our own streets and hedgerows. All these, carefully drawn, gracefully arranged by the hand of an artist, and treated in flat tones of colour in outline, can in combination with figures, flowers, and foliage, or without, be used in any decorative friezes or in panels, with excellent effect.

If the narrowness of worldly circumstances prevents us from having figure decoration in our rooms, we may still have, in distemper or other media, panels of coloured decoration of birds, or other natural objects, treated simply and inexpensively so as to come within the means of us all.

In my future lectures, I shall deal more definitely with panel and wall decoration applied to special rooms and situations.

In concluding this, my second address, I suggest for your consideration whether it is not desirable, from mere economical motives, to decorate your rooms a little more artistically; if the walls be of the usual bare type of one pattern paper or paint, you must do something to hide their bald and cold appearance by hanging on them engravings, pictures, or other artistic objects. How much better, then, would it be to spend the same money in having some really good art deco-

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ration, which should be a source of continual pleasure and delight!

In our dreary London rooms there might be internal light and colour, that should help to make us almost unmindful of the dinginess and smoke without, and add much to the comfort and home-like feeling which good colour, good design, and good taste cannot fail to give.

## LECTURE III.

## FURNITURE.

THE subject of my third lecture is 'Furniture ; and although, to a certain extent, I propose to treat it generally, reserving more special description for my next two lectures, I yet hope to make it of sufficient interest to warrant me in keeping you for the time in which I shall address you.

It is probable that you all have your own individual opinions as to the best ways of furnishing the houses you live in, and, if not, you may possibly say, that in these days of ' Queen Anne ' architecture, and fine art manufacture of all kinds, there will be no difficulty in obtaining anything that is wanted of fairly good taste, and which shall combine beauty and appropriateness of form and design, with usefulness and comfort.

If, in my remarks, I fall foul of the mere ordinary manufacturer of so-called art work, it must be distinctly understood that I fully recognise the important progress

made by such firms as Messrs. Jackson and Graham, Messrs. Gillow, Messrs. Trollope and Sons, and other well-known manufacturers, who have practically spared no pains to produce the best possible work, and have brought into association with themselves a number of artists, of high repute and knowledge, to aid them in their endeavours to give to the public furniture of thoroughly good art design, comfortable in shape, and sound and good in workmanship.

My quarrel is with the crowd of imitators who, appealing to the ignorance of the public rather than to their taste, endeavour to foist upon them goods which are said to be of the newest fashion of some particular style; which, like all other fashions, will soon be as obsolete as the imitations of the 'sella curulis' and the bronze 'bisellium'—to which we were so freely treated at the end of the last century—are at the present day.

As I said of decoration, so do I now say of furniture, that the higher art cultivation of individuals, and, as a sequence, of the whole community, is not to be arrived at by setting up any particular style or fashion of design, or by the narrow dogmas of interested persons, who, regardless of expense, insist upon the necessity of this kind of wall hanging, or that shape of

chair or buffet, and who, skilled in the use of fine-sounding phrases, and with a knowledge of the baser elements of human character—which delight in slavish imitation and so-called fashionable conceits of a passing style—seek to advertise their wares as ‘Queen Anne,’ ‘Old English,’ or ‘Chippendale,’ ‘Adams,’ or mediæval, and appeal more to the ignorance than to the real art knowledge and taste of society.

The word furniture in its ordinary acceptation and interpretation ‘represents anything that is moveable, transportable, and easy to place in security.’

In this lecture, I propose to include all the general fittings of a house, which, to a certain extent, would nowadays be called ‘fixtures,’ such as mantels and stoves, hanging closets in bedrooms, shelving, built-up buffets, and other special joiners’ work, all of which, I hope to show, may well and economically take the place of the more moveable and expensive articles of furniture. Let me say here that there is no absolute necessity that any of these closets or shelf-clusters should be made absolute fixtures, so that of necessity they become the property of the landlord at the end of a given term of years; they can all be made separate and distinct to fix in their various places, screwed into blocks or hanging pieces fixed to the walls, and can, if

not bought up by the incoming tenants, be, as a rule, removed and adapted for the new habitation.

Under the present unsatisfactory terms of leasehold tenure, tenants cannot be too careful in the arrangement of fitted furniture, that it shall not come under the designation of 'fixtures,' and thus become the property of the landlord. The ordinary class of landlords offer no inducements to tenants to improve their dwellings ; under the usual clauses of dilapidations and general maintenance, they compel the tenant, at the end of a seven years' lease, to entirely repaint and paper their property, and claim all fittings that may be fixed to the walls as their own. They offer no encouragement to a careful or improving tenant, and as a rule will allow nothing for improvements, while too often the unfortunate tenant finds, when it is too late, that he has taken a house in which he has to lay out large sums of money, before it can be made fairly habitable, with no chance of getting back any portion of his outlay : the drains are found utterly wrong, the miserable deal joiners' work is glossed over with imitation graining of other woods, the still worse plaster work is made to look fair and pleasant to the eye by a coat or two of distemper, and the wretched scamping nature of the work only becomes apparent after the

tenant has been in possession a few months and has bound himself by covenants, which will not only materially increase his annual rent, but be found a source of continual expense and annoyance to him during his tenure. I can only advise any one proposing to take on lease one of the ordinary speculative builders' houses, to take care, before signing any deed, that the house shall be properly surveyed and reported upon by some competent surveyor, or, if this expense be thought unnecessary, by some honest and qualified builder.

I wish particularly to advocate the greater use of plain fitted and designed furniture for recesses in various rooms, as they can be made at much less cost than the usual moveable furniture, can be adapted to the general character of the rooms, and if made as I shall hereafter describe will save much labour in dusting and cleaning, and will not form resting-places for the dirt and filth that accumulate, in most houses, on the tops of wardrobes and other pieces of furniture, the height of which prevents their being constantly dusted and kept clean.

In the furniture made by our best manufacturers, there is evinced a careful regard for grace and harmony of design, combined with use and suitability ; and this must be attributed to the fact that the designers are



not mere designers of chairs, tables, and curtain hangings, but men who, like the artists of the Middle Ages, believe that every creation of design should be as honestly and thoroughly thought out, whether it be the smallest fitting of a house, the commonest colouring of a wall, or the decoration of the smallest panel of a buffet or cabinet, as the most gorgeous edifice, the most exquisite painting, or the most noble piece of sculpture. Quite certain it is that no good work can be produced by the cramped efforts of designers, who see nothing beyond the mere buffet, chair, or table they may be working upon, and who cannot realise or conceive the proportion and place each piece is to take in the general arrangement of the room or building it is designed for.

It will be well for all English art, when architects, sculptors, and painters, like the artists of the Renaissance age, consider nothing too small or insignificant to engage their thoughts and artistic skill : when, like them, they shall in no wise consider it derogatory to their rank to think out and design the lowliest piece of furniture, or the pattern or colouring of the smallest article, whether of wall-hanging, floor-covering, or general fittings of a room.

As in decoration, so also in furniture, the art student and workman, as well as the general public,

are largely indebted to the various exhibitions and loan collections which have from time to time been formed in this country and abroad, during the last thirty years, for a more general knowledge of the furniture of past ages, and for the opportunity thus given for careful study and comparison of the work of various epochs. The vast number of good examples brought together at South Kensington offer not only an opportunity to the sightseer to improve his knowledge of ancient work, but give the art workman and designer a chance of studying the characteristics of design and construction in the numerous beautiful objects thus brought together, and have, without doubt, imperceptibly imbued them with a higher feeling for beauty and truthfulness of design, and led to greater skill of handicraft, in the work of the various trades, especially cognate to the chief art of architecture.

Furniture has, in all ages, to a great extent, followed the fashion or style of the architecture of the period ; both, in early times, were made to conform to the customs and requirements of the people of the particular age.

It is true that, after the golden age of the early Renaissance, when all the great arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting were combined in one great

and harmonious effort, the sister arts of painting and sculpture became more or less severed, and began to start into independent life and existence:

After the sixteenth century, in furniture, as in architecture, there was a manifest decline in its artistic character, proportion, and beauty, in favour of a degenerate taste in design, and great exaggeration and capricious eccentricity of form and treatment, until in the eighteenth century there was, for a brief period, a return to greater simplicity and soberness of design and form.

The reaction from the voluptuousness and exuberance of the past century, brought back, for a while, greater and better taste in all design, and a seeming desire to return to the grace and beauty of delicate classic character and feeling.

Still later, the designs of furniture, as well as of decoration, were, to a great extent, principally copied from the wall paintings of Pompeii; this fashion, however, had but a short and fitful life, degenerating in a few years into feeble prettinesses, false construction and taste, and great extravagance of cost; each individual followed his or her own caprice, and furnished in the style and period each thought best; the result was a lamentable jumble of works, exemplifying no

particular conditions of life, and leaving no particular record of their own, or of the feelings of the age to which they belong, except, perhaps, a bad record of absolute copyism, based on no real knowledge of, or regard for, the style of any particular age, but subject only to the changes of individual caprice and fashion.

While we cannot but admire the great beauty of design and workmanship of the larger and more important pieces of furniture of past ages, and may be glad to become possessors of them as works of art, even as we may delight to gather around us examples of beautiful sculpture, painting, and other art work of bygone ages, we can hardly, in these days, desire to imitate their luxury or costliness of make or design, and although we may welcome them as charming additions to our art collections, we should, I take it, hardly desire to see them imitated for the changed conditions and requirements of our own day.

Altered social conditions of the day have changed the habits, customs, and requirements of modern society. Nowadays our cabinets have to contain beautiful specimens of porcelain and pottery, of gold and silver, and other metal work, tissues, and other objects of art, which we desire to be seen by our friends, and not to

were made, as a rule, conformable to the requirements and luxurious tastes of the day, and were, with all their elaboration, thoroughly and entirely adapted for the purposes for which they were designed.

M. Jacquemart, in his most interesting and exhaustive history of furniture, enters at large into the description of the furniture of past ages, and the various alterations in ways of living, which practically brought about the changes in furniture design and arrangement.

Before leaving this part of my lecture, it is well to notice how gradually the simple pieces of furniture of

the earliest times became amplified and enlarged to meet the more luxurious requirements of more modern times. To quote M. Jacquemart :—

‘ The “*crédence*,” a simple table for writing or tasting provisions, as its name indicates, becomes an elegant cupboard breast high, often with flaps, and a small under-shelf ; then it is completed by a back-piece, and even by a shelf, passing on thus to the form of the buffet. “ This latter name was originally ” given to the room destined to contain the most valuable plate ; later on it was applied to a piece of furniture serving the same purpose, and, by analogy, to the articles which decorated it. . . . The “*dressoir*” or “*étagère*” differed little from the buffet, large pieces of gold plate and other sumptuous articles were exposed there, the number of the shelves was fixed by etiquette, according to the rank of the persons.’

Then there were chairs or ‘*chaises*’ plain and folding, revolving chairs (*chaises à pivots*), and the gossiping-chair (*chaise caquetoire*), somewhat analogous to the ‘*causeuses*’ of modern times ; then there were the double-bodied presses or ‘*armoires*,’ or cabinets turned into cupboards with folding doors, tables, beds, and seats of all description.

Later on, China and Japan contributed to the

furniture of the houses of the wealthy, various small pieces of furniture 'de luxe,' of red, gold, and black lacquer; India and Persia, a variety of pieces in sculptured and sandal wood, and elaborate 'piqué' or inlaid work; Italy, its gorgeous specimens of carved, incrustated, and inlaid ivory, mosaic, and marquetry work, until in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we descend to the extravagance of design and ornamentation in bulbous-shaped forms, overlaid with tortoiseshell, and gilt and chased metal work of all descriptions, with all the gingerbread and show of twisted and curled mouldings, and elaborate mirrors; all these articles were made more for show than real use: in them (to quote M. Jacquemart)—

'Form usurps unheard-of licence, every object swells itself to assume fantastic curves; nothing is straight or regular; angles are rounded and hollowed; unlooked-for sinuosities furrow the surfaces; bulged, twisted, caricatured forms are alone admitted, and above sprouts bronze vegetation with unnatural endive foliage; brass gilded with ormolu, rolls along in fantastic borders, or gathers suddenly in unforeseen clusters, and thus an eccentric whole is completed, which, while always clever, is sometimes elegant notwithstanding its singularity. . . . Caprice is carried to

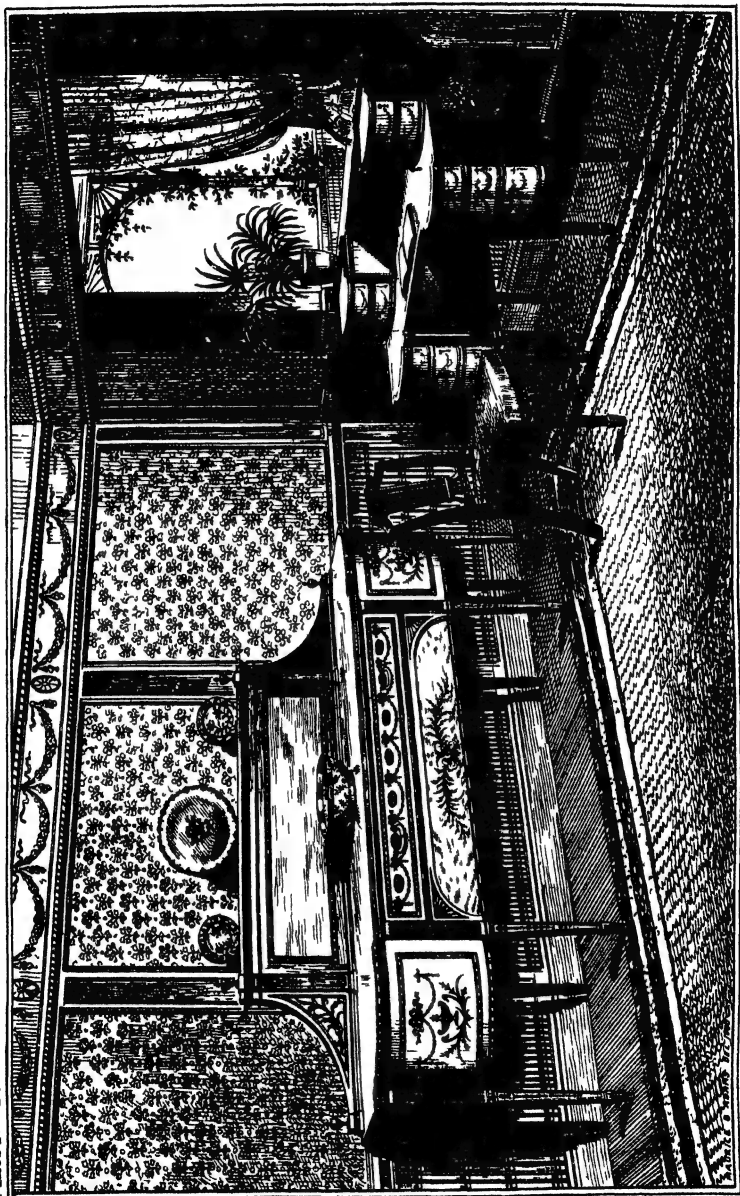
such an extent that the fundamental law of art—propriety—is totally forgotten.’

The period of Louis XVI. brought back upholsterers to sobriety and simplicity, and the characteristics of the delicate artistic designs and workmanship of this time are influencing the revival of art furniture to a large extent in England, combined with the works of the English designers—Sheraton, Chippendale, and Adams, whose designs are being now largely produced to suit the present fashion of architecture, yclept ‘Queen Anne.’

In Plate VI. I give an illustration of a group of furniture made by Messrs. Holland, after old examples by Sheraton, Adams, and Chippendale. The sideboard of Spanish mahogany, 7 ft. 6 in. long, with straight front and slightly elliptic ends, and shaped and panelled back, is an exceedingly good specimen of modern work after Sheraton, and is of the highest skill in workmanship and general design, being richly inlaid with satin and various coloured woods. The chair and writing-table are both good examples of the adaptation of the eighteenth-century designs to modern furniture, and have been selected to show that good modern upholsterers are endeavouring to imitate the grace and elegance of design of the work of this parti-



Plate No 6.



An Escribitor a chair and a Sideboard #

HOLLAND AND SONS



cular date, and to combine with it exceeding excellence of workmanship. In thus reverting back to a period of general artistic merit in form and decoration, we may expect that they will ere long be able and willing to provide furniture of equally good form and design, but less elaborate in ornament and decoration, out of simpler and less expensive woods at a moderate price ; for I venture to hope that, when once the love of and taste for furniture of graceful form and ornamentation are more largely disseminated, all good manufacturers will find it worth their while to provide inexpensive furniture for the million, and will eventually oust from their show-rooms the inartistic and generally commonplace examples, which are now made up to suit the demands of the depraved taste of the uneducated public.

In the work of Chippendale, we see great carefulness of construction, general comfort, and suitability of form and arrangement, although in many of his designs there is a manifest imitation of French or Chinese ornament and form, which is anything but satisfactory, and the elaborate and delicate fretwork and carving naturally tend to make any imitation of his designs expensive.

As a type of old work suitable to houses of the

present day, there is much in the modern imitation of Chippendale work which commends itself to the present style of house-building. It is to be regretted, however, that the craze for all this kind of work should practically not only give the dealers the chance of charging exorbitant prices for old examples, but, to a certain extent, encourage a somewhat extravagant idea of the worth of modern imitations.

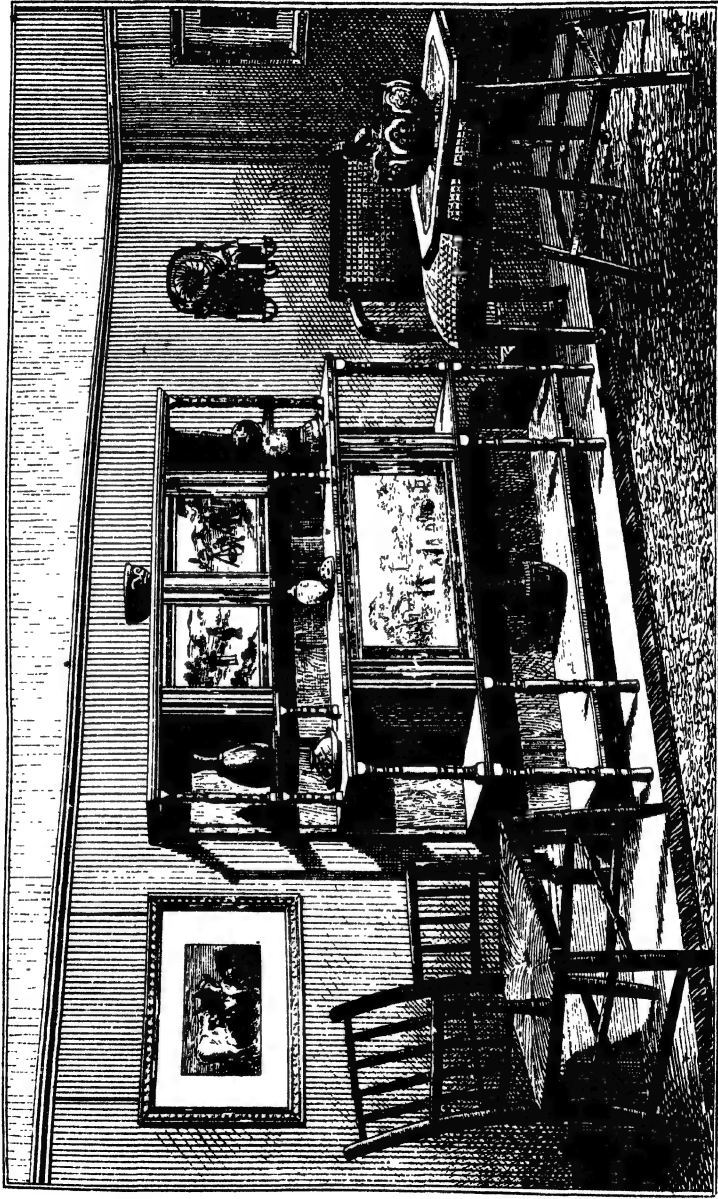
Heppelwhite was another manufacturer of this period who endeavoured to combine general elegance of design with comfort and suitability of form, and whose work is now much valued by *connoisseurs* for its general goodness of make and design. In the work of both these makers, solidity, comfort, and sound construction are especially noticeable, while there is an absence, as a rule, of expensive ornamentation, and unnecessary turning and cutting.

Sheraton was another maker who, in the beginning of this century, brought the art of furniture making into high repute, and whose work may generally be said to be based on that of Heppelwhite and Chippendale, with the addition of painted decoration inserted in friezes and pilasters.

I am quite aware that first-class workmanship is well worthy of first-class prices, but I cannot but



Plate N<sup>o</sup>. 7.



A Drawing Room Cabinet Sideboard.

MESS<sup>rs</sup> JACKSON & GRAHAM

think good modern upholsterers might give us furniture made after the manner and form of the makers I have named, at a somewhat less extravagant price than that generally charged. A good deal of the unnecessary carving in the chair backs might be omitted, and while the general excellence of the designs, as regards form and comfort, might be adhered to, they could in a great measure be simplified, so as to bring the price within the reach of all of us.

A good dining-room chair, artistic in design, comfortable in shape, and of good mahogany or oak, covered with leather, or other good wearing stuff, ought to be made for 3*l.* or 3*l.* 10*s.*

I was indebted to Messrs. Jackson and Graham, and Messrs. Gillow, for the loan of some exceedingly good examples of modern, so-called Chippendale, Adams, and Sheraton work, which form the subjects of some of my illustrations, in which general simplicity of form, and honesty of construction and design, are set forth. I want to see such firms as these give us this kind of work at a more moderate price, and I see no reason why this cannot be done.

The small cabinet, shown in Plate VII., by Messrs. Jackson and Graham seems to me to combine general artistic merit of design with simplicity and

practical common sense in form and arrangement ; it adapts itself equally well for books and china, with well-arranged cupboard space for books and ladies' work ; the fronts of these cupboards are formed with Chinese paintings on panel, exquisitely drawn and tinted, which harmonise well with the delicate satin-wood of which the cabinet is made. The supports are simply turned, and the whole design is free from all the unnecessary ornament and carving which form so large and so expensive an item in most modern furniture. Such a cabinet as this made in American walnut or mahogany would cost about 16*l*. The little occasional table, shown in the illustration, is strong on its legs and serviceable in shape, and can be made for about 30*s*. The plain armchair, with its delicately turned legs and framing, and with split willow-plaited seat stained in different colours, cannot be called expensive at 30*s*. ; and is, while pleasant to look at, exceedingly comfortable in shape.

While it is of course possible for those whose means are unlimited to obtain good artistic work, the largely increased use of machinery should enable us to obtain this at moderate cost ; for although we must necessarily be dependent upon skill of pure handicraft for many articles of furniture and decoration, there is



no real reason why machinery, properly applied, should not produce good work for the million.

After all, the manufacturer must not be entirely blamed for extravagance and high prices ; common sense in house decoration and furnishing has not yet been arrived at by the majority of the public. They are content to accept advice in most important matters, but imagine that they can, without help, furnish and decorate their homes, and in matters of taste believe that they have as much a right to have an opinion as the skilled professional artist.

This want of plain common sense often leads them to avoid asking the opinion of those whom they may think will seek to over-ride their real 'want of taste,' and, as physicians of art, to lead their judgment from their commonplace, vulgar, and oftentimes, probably, grossly extravagant ideas, to those more simple and inexpensive. Hence, they hand themselves over, body and soul, to some inferior decorator, whom they think they can lead ; who begins by bowing down to their own expressed whims and fancies, flatters their vanity and conceit, and ends by perpetrating the grossest of anachronisms, and supplying the vulgarest of designs, in decoration and furniture, at a large and oftentimes excessive outlay of money. If an artist offers advice, as an

*amicus curiæ*, unless it should happen that it be in accord with the wishes of the individual, he will probably be politely snubbed, and told that it is 'a question of taste,' and that he or she knows best what he or she likes. Of course it is a question of taste, but of educated taste, not of mere whim or fancy. I could quote innumerable examples of this utter want of common sense. I quote one example only. I heard of a lady selecting a carpet, and when told that the particular pattern was ugly in design, quietly remarking, 'Ah! well, you know, all the ugly patterns are the fashion now.' Nonsense such as this only shows the gross ignorance and conceit of a large proportion of the public, and the influence of the so-called schools of ignorant decorators, whose dogmas lead to the endless vulgarity and ignorance of much modern decoration and furniture. As a late writer on art (I believe it was Mr. Beavington Atkinson), in a very careful and critical paper on 'Decorative Art applied to Domestic Uses,' in 'Blackwood's Magazine' (March 1869), truly said, 'Few persons have the resolution to make their houses plain, if they possess the means of loading every wall and crowding every floor with ponderous and pompous decoration. When purchasers abound in money, and manufacturers have no higher ends than trade, it

is to be feared that the virtue of simplicity will in vain make her voice heard in our dwellings.'

Why cannot people understand that good taste and simplicity go hand in hand with common sense, while eccentricities and extravagances of all kinds are not only vulgar, but senseless, leading to all kinds of excesses, and utterly at variance with the better instincts of human nature.

'I know what I like' is a common phrase, but with all due respect I unhesitatingly assert that very few people do know what they like in matters of household taste, and are led into constant changes and expenses by the want of that common sense which, in other matters of life, they may possibly possess.

In furniture for every-day houses we want, first of all, that everything shall be fitted for its purpose, shall not be extravagant in design, shall be absolutely useful, and, if it be a chair or couch, absolutely comfortable. Cabinets are made to hold collections of china, and other artistic objects; what need, therefore, that the case which contains these be elaborately carved and gilt, and finished with endless rows of tiny turned balusters, utterly useless, but terribly costly.

Simple framework is all that is required, with glass enclosing doors to protect the objects from dust; but

let the framework be as unpretentious as possible, and not heavy and extravagant in elaboration, moulding, or carving, utterly out of place and character with its purpose.

Tables should be strong and well made, of good seasoned wood, the legs plainly and inexpensively turned, and not curved into absurdly contorted forms. All elaboration of carving and moulding is utterly thrown away in the legs of a chair or table, which are, as a rule, hidden from view. Care should be taken that the table-legs should be set well back, so as not to interfere with the comfort of those whose places may be opposite to them. As a rule, the present telescopic arrangement of the dining-room table is most suitable for modern requirements. It will fold up to a moderate table for four people, or will expand for twenty, or even more. I cannot accept the theories of those who ask us to adopt the old-fashioned long-framed table, which may yet be seen in many an old hall in England. We cannot have them made in sets of various sizes to suit different requirements, and a table that would hold even twelve would be absurd, as a general rule, in any moderate-sized dining-room. It is this kind of crazing after old-fashioned things, without discriminating as to what to take and what to avoid, which

sets so many sensible people against all ancient forms and examples.

Chairs should be, first of all, comfortable, made to the shape of the back, strong and sound in construction, with no projecting carving or bossed-out ornament to torture the back, and no lines of jagged brass-headed pins to catch and tear ladies' dresses. Chairs and couches should be comfortably stuffed, and luxurious in breadth of surface for rest and ease, not cramped and stiff, after the manner of the designs of some of our so-called advanced schools of furniture designers. Easy chairs should mean easy chairs, and not the miserable shams in which you cannot sit or rest with comfort. All these kind of couches may be made at moderate cost, providing you do not ask for elaborate turned wood framing, which not only adds materially to the cost, but detracts from the comfort and convenience of the piece of furniture. We do not want sideboards made in imitation of a classic shrine, with wine coolers made after the manner of Grecian sarcophagi.

If the public will only be content to make their houses simple and plain, instead of overloading them with heavy and costly furniture—generally not only uncomfortable and expensive, but utterly stiff and at

variance with any home-like feelings of comfort and ease—we might hope that true art would find a place in all our homes, and, as the same writer in the article I have before quoted aptly wrote :—

‘If a man, in the adorning and ordering of his house, would bring a few grains of the common sense which serves him so well in the counting-house, then, at all events, might we hope to see banished from the hall, the dining-room, and the drawing-room, those vulgarities, absurdities, monstrosities, which so often outrage well-balanced judgment and sin against sober taste.’

The dining-rooms of many town houses are arranged with recesses in one end or side, in which obviously it is suggested that the sideboard shall be placed ; until quite recently these so-called ‘sideboards,’ or ‘buffets,’ consisted of two flanking cupboards, with an open central space for a wine cooler, a heavy dresser top with two or three drawers, often made with bulbous and flowing fronts, and the whole surmounted by an enormous glass, enclosed within a heavy frame, twisted and curled and carved into many curious forms.

The art was bad, the construction worse, the expense enormous, and the arrangement or fitting-up,

for practical purposes, anything but satisfactory ; the usual cellaret in one cupboard was so divided that the bottles and decanters wobbled about in them, to their own imminent risk of breakage, and certain shaking-up of their contents ; the shelves were so divided that too much space was left for some, and not nearly enough for other articles usually stowed away in such places ; the drawer space was utterly wasted, and little or no thought was taken that the sideboard should be fitted up for its particular purpose and use, in accordance with the requirements of an ordinary household.

This sketch of an ordinary dining-room sideboard is no exaggeration. Such pieces of furniture still exist in many modern houses ; nor can I see that any great amount of improvement has been made in late years in this essentially necessary part of the furniture of a dining-room. It is true that there has been much greater elaboration in the designs of sideboards or buffets ; carving, turning, and ‘balustrading’—I use the term to represent the little balconies of tiny columns with which so many of the new designs are embellished—have been amplified ; panels have been gorgeously inlaid ; and the cost has increased in proportion, so that a buffet of moderate size will cost from 50*l.* to 100*l.* at least.

Instead, therefore, of all this piling up of costly ornamentation and construction, I submit that as a buffet or 'dressoir' is practically for use, and not for show, except for that of plate, or valuable china and



glass, the general design might be very much simplified, and that a good useful piece of furniture, combining the requisite cupboards, cellarets, and drawers, properly arranged for their several purposes, with a moderate sized Venetian glass in the centre of the back, flanked



by carefully arranged shelves, and glass-enclosed cupboards, for holding china and Venetian glass, for show or for use, might be made of mahogany, wainscot, or deal painted, free from elaborate mouldings, turning, or carving, but good in form and general design, for a considerably less sum than that charged for any moderate-sized sideboard by any really good manufacturer.

The small buffet shown in sketch, by Messrs. Morris and Co., designed by Mr. Webb, is well suited for a small room, being 5 ft. long by about 16 in. projection, is conveniently fitted up with useful drawers and cupboards, and with sufficient shelf accommodation for glass and china, as well as for dinner use. Such a piece as this could be well made at moderate cost in deal or pitch pine, and be either stained and varnished or lacquer-painted.

How many professional men are there in towns who use their dining-rooms for professional purposes during the day, and who would gladly have some piece of furniture that should answer for the double purpose of putting away books, drawings, engravings, photographs, or papers, and for the general dining-room use? How much better, therefore, would it be for any one, to whom a piece of furniture having this double use would be invaluable, to state his special require-

ments, and have a piece of furniture designed for the purpose, rather than to hastily purchase that which, in too many instances, answers neither purpose quite satisfactorily.

A buffet containing drawers for engravings or photographs, cellaret for wine, cupboards with convenient fittings, and dresser accommodation, for all the necessary dining-room paraphernalia, with shelves or cupboards over, for good china and glass, might be made quite as artistic, and much more inexpensively, than the elaborate productions which we see nowadays in so many modern dining-rooms.

Serving hatches from the small back rooms, or light lifts from the basement, might be equally well incorporated in the buffet, and thus we should obtain an eminently useful piece of furniture, adapted for the work of the day, as well as that of the evening.

Where practicable, a good useful buffet might be made to fill up the dining-room recess, of painted or stained deal or pitch-pine, at a comparatively moderate cost, in which might well be provided all necessary accommodation for dining-room purposes, with shelves for the display of plate and *bric-à-brac*, cupboards with glazed doors for good glass or other objects for show or use, drawers for papers or drawings, or other sized.



Plate N<sup>o</sup> 8.



A. Dining-Room-Sideboard

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MESSRS. JACKSON & GRAHAM

working belongings of a professional man, the whole artistic in design and suitable and commodious in arrangement, without any of the useless ornamentation with which modern upholsterers think it necessary to overload the general run of sideboards they offer for sale.

In Plate VIII. I submit a sketch of a buffet such as I have described, which, although to my mind somewhat over-elaborated with unnecessary carving and ornament, combines all the requisites of a side-board for general dining-room use, with shelves for china and glass, ample space for dinner or breakfast service, cellaret for wine, drawers for table linen as well as for drawings or instruments, and cupboards for papers ; the glass is of sufficient size to lighten up the room without being ugly or vulgar in shape. Such a buffet as this, made simpler in design by the omission of some of the unnecessary carving and notchings, which are not only expensive but collect dirt and dust, would answer all the purposes I have described, and ought to be made well for about 30% or 35%. The same illustration shows an arrangement of a simple matting dado, with paper centre space for pictures, and a plain-coloured distemper frieze over divided by a small moulding or picture-rail.

Window openings are not half utilised, as a rule, in

sitting-rooms ; the space is very often filled up by a chair, or small table, altogether in the way ; in these window recesses might be made comfortable seats, or divans, amply and fully stuffed for ease and comfort, covered with leather or stuff, to harmonise with the other work in the rooms ; and the seat inside might be fitted up for newspapers or magazines, or, in the bedrooms, for clothes, bonnets, or any other special purpose for which they might be desired.

Plain deal-framed seats and risers are all that are required, properly stuffed and covered ; any good joiner or upholsterer would make these at a very moderate cost, and provide you with not only comfortable seats but useful spaces for stowing away and preserving all sorts of things, for which it is often so difficult to find room in a town house of ordinary dimensions.

In the recesses of the bedrooms might be arranged hanging closets for dresses, with shelves for linen, boxes for boots and bonnets, and the numerous articles of dress which necessarily accumulate in an English household, where we have to provide for all sorts of seasons, and can hardly ever be sure of whether we want spring, summer, or winter clothing. A simple deal panelled cupboard front is all that is required.

The centre panel might be filled in with looking-glass down to the ground, like an ordinary wardrobe, the doors divided, so as not to be cumbrous or heavy, the whole height of the cupboard being from 7 to 8 feet, including the bonnet or boot box at the bottom and the shelf at the top. Between the top of this and the ceiling the space should be filled up with a smaller cupboard, with shelves for stowing away surplus clothes and linen, but I need hardly suggest a use for any cupboards or shelves; the ladies of the house will, I am sure, not think my suggestions useless. My object in suggesting the filling up the top space is that there shall be no broad surfaces, such as those left at the top of ordinary wardrobes—which are seldom or ever really dusted—for the accumulation of unhealthy dust and dirt. It is only necessary to ask any of my readers to examine the tops of any of their wardrobes or bookcases in their sitting or bedrooms, and if they are not somewhat astonished with what they will find, I will confess my error in thus strongly objecting to what I call traps for dirt and disease.

I might suggest innumerable other ways of adapting what I call constructive furniture for the various rooms in a town house, which could be carried out at comparatively small cost. The cupboard fronts I have here sug-

gested could be made in deal, painted, for a few pounds ; the cost of the inside fittings, of course, would vary according to what was required, but with a little thought and a little care all this kind of constructive furniture may be made artistic in character, easily removeable, eminently useful, and withal inexpensive.

The additional labour entailed in most houses upon the servants, of carrying water from the basement to the upper floors, or even from one floor to another, may be greatly avoided by the more general use of fitted lavatories in the bed and dressing-rooms. With these a constant supply of water can be obtained at any moment, and the evils of broken crockery, and water tepid from long standing, will be avoided. This arrangement must not, for a moment, be thought of, unless the waste-pipes can be carried right away, so as to empty free into the open air, and be quite disconnected with any drains.

The first expense is a trifle greater than that of good washstands and expensive services of crockery, but the comfort, not to say the luxury, of cold and hot water in constant supply in ample basins, is worth all the extra cost, to say nothing of the saving of labour in the house, and the constant expense of making good broken crockery. These basins can be fitted with



plain marble-tops, sunk for brushes and the other necessities of the toilet, and fitted under with small enclosing cupboards, which can be provided with racks or shelves for boots and shoes, articles of dress usually difficult to place away in ordinary dressing-rooms.

The mantel-pieces of most of the modern London houses are generally of the most commonplace character, abominable in design and construction, perhaps black marble, with enormous trusses, in the dining-room, bad in form, in outline, and construction; in the drawing-room of similar character, but of white or veined marble. To leave these as they are would utterly destroy all decorative effect in a room; when everything else looked well, they would remain as plague spots, on which the eye would continually rest. If I advocate their removal, I shall be told that I am going away from my first principles of economy, but at the risk of this, I would say, get rid of them at once. Take them down carefully, and take out the grates and stow them all away in some cellar, where they can be brought to light and refixed when your lease is up, and any new mantel-piece that you may put up can be fixed as a piece of furniture, so as to be taken down and removed without damage to the walls.

In many of the houses of the date of the early

part of the eighteenth, and even in some of those built in the early part of this century, there remain mantel-pieces and grates of good design and proportion, in which the adaptation of good Greek forms and detail, with delicate inlays of rare marbles, or gracefully sculptured panels and enrichments, are well and carefully carried out ; these, of course, are invaluable.

The simpler mantel-pieces of the periods I have named in plain painted deal, with well-proportioned mouldings and delicately modelled enrichments and figure panels, after Flaxman, are very good in their way, and in nowise come under the category of the modern abominations of what are called 'boxed-marble,' in which form, detail, moulding, and carving are all execrable.

In olden days, the mantel-pieces were, as a rule, the most important features in a room, carved with many a quaint device, blazoned with heraldic decoration, or filled with subject panels, exquisitely wrought and moulded, or with painting and carving, in which the highest skill of the sculptor and painter were brought into association with the designer's skill. They thus became grand and imposing features in the banqueting-hall or lady's chamber, objects of art and beauty, setting forth the cultured taste and refinement

of the artists of past generations, and teaching us lessons of skill and grace in design and detail, which we may well and wisely take to heart.

I need but refer you to the many exquisite examples of old mediæval work, built up with the walls, which still remain to us in many old houses in England and abroad, with their deeply recessed chimney corners, pleasant places for after-dinner rest, or to the examples of later days in some of the old mansions of England, all exquisitely designed with various marbles inlaid and sculptured, or to the more elaborate but equally beautiful structures of carved and panelled wainscot with quaint panelling, curiously wrought columns, and cunningly devised recesses and shelves, with portraits or other good work of the painter's art enframed in well-wrought mouldings in the central spaces, like some of those in Hatfield-house, Audley End, Hampton-court Palace, and numerous other old English mansions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

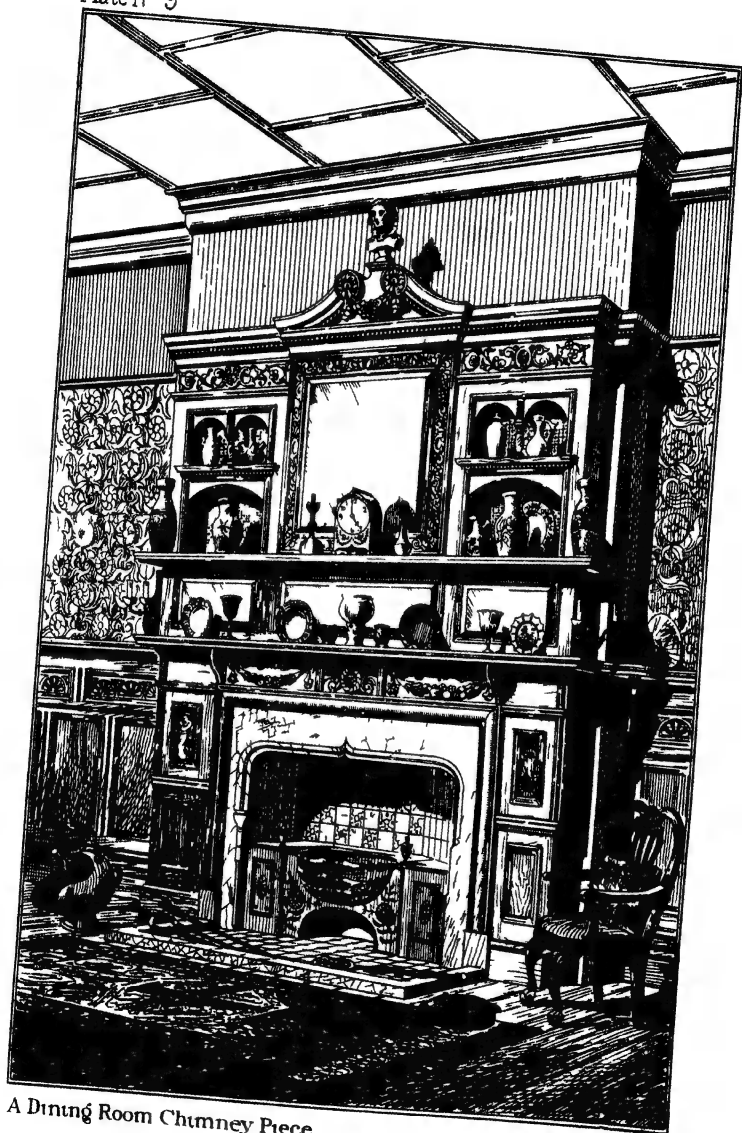
In these old buildings the mantel-pieces were works of art in the rooms, the centres to which all other panelling and decoration led up. The grates of the more important rooms were massive, with wrought or cast dog-irons of good design, backs cast with some figure subjects in bold relief, all grateful and pleasant

to look at through the cheery blaze and sparkle of burning logs.

What a painful contrast do the machine-made modern ones of to-day offer to us, in which there is utter want of taste and design.

The mantel-piece, then, should be an important feature in any room. In the dining room it may be of unpolished wainscot, mahogany, American walnut, or painted deal, with a lining of black or golden Sienna marble; the lower panels may be filled in with good painted subject tiles, or delicate carving of fruit or flowers, the main shelf sufficiently broad to take, if necessary, the various ornaments, useful or otherwise, which are wanted, with perhaps a centre panel for a good portrait or subject picture, enframed in boldly carved moulding; round it, on either side, might be plain panelling, carried up to the ceiling line, with recesses for sculpture or bronzes, or tiers of shelves for those whose tastes lie in china or other *bric-à-brac*, the top perhaps finished with a bold curved cove, filled in with stamped leather or decorative enrichment.

I give an example of a mantel-piece (Plate IX.) which has been lately fitted up in the dining-room of an ordinary London house from my own designs. The



A Dining Room Chimney Piece

ROBERT W EDIS F.S.A. ARCHT



old grate was removed and the space lined with ornamental tiles, and the fire-place itself enframed with golden Sienna marble slightly moulded on the inner edge. The mantel-piece itself was of unpolished American walnut, to accord with the moulded dado round the room, the lower panels filled in with good figure tiles, and the upper portion arranged with recesses and shelves for china and other ornaments, with good splayed Venetian glasses in the panels to lighten up the room and reflect the ornaments, the recesses being lined with stamped and gilded leather ; the top moulding was made to carry round with the picture-rail ; the whole being designed to suit the character of the room and to form an important part of its artistic decoration.

For the drawing-room and library I would suggest designed mantels of similar character, but carried out to meet the special requirements of the two rooms ; in the one might be subdued delicate embroidery, painted tiles, or Japanese lacquer panels, with recessed shelves, lined with velvet, to set off the china or glass, the sides formed into groups of useful shelves or brackets, and the centre filled with a splayed Venetian glass, of not too great a height from the ground to be rendered useless, and of sufficient size to reflect the

works of art in the room, and thus add to its cheerfulness and charm.

In the library, I would arrange small flanking cupboards for cigars or tobacco for those who smoke, with shelves for china or books, to carry on the general furniture of the room, so that the mantel-piece should not appear as the one break in the line. But, above all, please to understand that these mantel-pieces should be designed so as to be not mere objects of ornament, but absolutely useful as pieces of furniture. Why should not flanking cupboards be provided, such as I have shown in one of my illustrations (Plate X.), for guns, swords, and fishing-rods, and the various paraphernalia of a sportsman or a soldier. If the cupboards be made air and dust-tight, all these belongings, which, to their detriment, are too often stowed away in cases, may be kept more carefully, and will add materially to the general appearance of the room, giving it at once an air of use, as well as of comfort.

Many of you do not hesitate to spend 20*l.* to a 100*l.* on a picture or piece of china, which, while of course beautiful in itself, cannot give you half the pleasure, or half the variety, as the same sum of money spent on a really good mantel-piece. For from 20*l.* to a 100*l.* you may have a mantel-piece which shall



not only be beautiful but useful, and which shall accord with the general artistic furniture in your room, and in which works of art in the shape of well-drawn figure tiles, delicately modelled pieces of terracotta work, or panels of wood carving, and small but useful Venetian mirrors, or other similar work, may be enframed.

For 50*l.* or 60*l.* you may get a really good mantel-piece, the fire-place lined with tiles of good design, and a dog-grate that shall burn coals or wood in the winter, or be fitted to hold flowers in the summer time ; and for almost the price of an ordinary marble mantel you may in your bedrooms get one of painted deal, with art tiles that will not offend the eye whenever you look upon them. In illustration of this portion of my remarks are shown various designs for mantel-pieces,—setting forth some few suggestions for the more useful and advantageous treatment of this part of the furniture of an ordinary house,—which may be applied to almost any room. All of these have been executed at a cost varying from 5*l.* to 60*l.*, inclusive of glasses, grates, and tiles, the more elaborate examples having been executed in wainscot mahogany and American walnut ; but by using plain deal or pine, painted and varnished, a considerable

saving of expense might be made. I do not offer them as designs to be accepted by you, but simply as examples of my views of the general treatment of ordinary mantel-pieces.

The illustration (Plate X.) shows an arrangement of cupboards and shelves which I have designed for guns, fishing-rods, swords and china, cigars, tobacco, and pipes in my own library. This work was done in deal, painted, at a moderate cost, the tiles and figure plaques after Teniers, being from an old German stove, and utterly unseen until placed as I have shown. The whole work was executed for me by an ordinary builder, and fitted over the existing mantel-piece, which, fortunately, happens to be of simple and fairly good design, the house having been originally designed by an architect, and not by a speculative builder.

In the smaller bedrooms or dressing-rooms, where space is not over ample, I see no reason why the mantel-piece should not, to a certain extent, be formed into a sort of dressing-table. Above the shelf, which adapts itself easily for all dressing paraphernalia, on either side, might be formed small cupboards, useful for many purposes, the centre space between being filled up by a sufficiently large looking-glass, flanked



A Study Mantel Piece.

ROBERT W EDIS F.S.A. ART



with light moveable brackets for gas or candles, the whole made of deal stained and polished, or painted and varnished, or of some other inexpensive wood.

An arrangement of this kind would naturally not be suitable for the more important work of a lady's toilet; but in small bachelor or dressing-rooms, it would, I venture to think, be found sufficient for all purposes, and infinitely better than the moveable table, which generally occupies the whole window space, the white dressing-table cover of which, however charming it may be when first put on, too soon gets smeared and spotted with the blacks and dust which blow in whenever the window is opened, or find their way mysteriously, but surely, through cracks and crevices, one knows not how, to the certain ruin as regards cleanliness of anything within their reach.

In ordinary bedrooms, a plain deal painted and varnished mantel can be put up for a very small expense. I saw recently an exceedingly good example of a cheap and simple bedroom chimney-piece made by Messrs. Longden and Co., of Sheffield, from the designs of a well-known architect, in deal, red-lacquer painted, with grate, fire-lumps, and tiles, the total cost of which was 4*l.* 17*s.* inclusive, the mantel-piece itself, with tiles, costing 3*l.* 2*s.*, and the grate 1*l.* 15*s.* In

the hall, this kind of simple design, with cupboards over, fitted up for gloves and brushes, and with a lining of tiles, which can be obtained of good design and colour for 1s. each at Messrs. Minton or other manufacturers, would be a pleasant and cheerful feature in the generally dreary entrance of a town house.

If you do not wish, for various reasons, to remove the existing grates and mantels of your house, you can adapt some design for fitting up over the old mantels, with some useful piece of furniture, at a small cost, and thus improve the general effect of your rooms without interference with existing arrangements, and without adopting the commonplace, tasteless, and eminently dirty alternative of a wooden mantelboard, covered with velvet or cloth with senseless and useless fringe.

In my own dining-room I have fitted up the space over the existing mantel-piece (see Plate XI.) with a cluster of shelves specially made to take blue and white china, which, to my mind, has a much more decorative effect, arranged as I have shown, than when hung up or placed in single and isolated pieces. The shelves are moulded on the edge and made narrower as they rise in height, and the whole cluster is fastened to the wall with strong wrought-iron brackets, the painted wall surface forming an excellent background for the china.



*A Dining Room Fireplace showing how an ordinary Ornate Mantel Piece may be treated \**

ROBERT W. EDIS F.S.A. ARCHT





The whole was put up at the cost of a few pounds. Under the lower shelf I have arranged a light rod on which are hung russet-brown Utrecht velvet curtains to hide the modern mantel-piece, and to shut in the whole space when a fire is not required.

In the increased use of painted tiles in the decoration and furniture of our houses, we are practically doing good to a large number of ladies anxious and willing to find some means of livelihood; the painting of tiles is eminently a work for their light hands, and the good taste which most educated ladies possess will suggest many ways of adapting the simplest flowers of the field, in proper decorative treatment and ornamentation of tiles.

Before leaving the subject of fire-places, let me say a few words about grates and fenders; as a rule nothing can be worse in taste and design than these—the grates are not only hideous in shape, but in the better rooms of the house are often of burnished steel with laid-on ormolu mouldings, all necessitating a large amount of time and labour in keeping bright and clean. As a rule, these grates are as extravagant as they are ugly, consuming a maximum quantity of coal, and giving out a minimum amount of heat; as a consequence, all kinds of attempts are made to diminish the consumption

and increase the heat, by inserting fire-lump sides or balls, and putting in iron false bottoms ; all these makeshifts are unsatisfactory. There is no reason why you should not have good artistic grates, combined with a maximum amount of heat from the coal consumed, and—if the room be large, and access can be got to the external air—by means of many of the now well-known ventilating grates, pure warm fresh air can be supplied at will, to add to the warmth and comfort of the rooms, at a comparatively small expense.

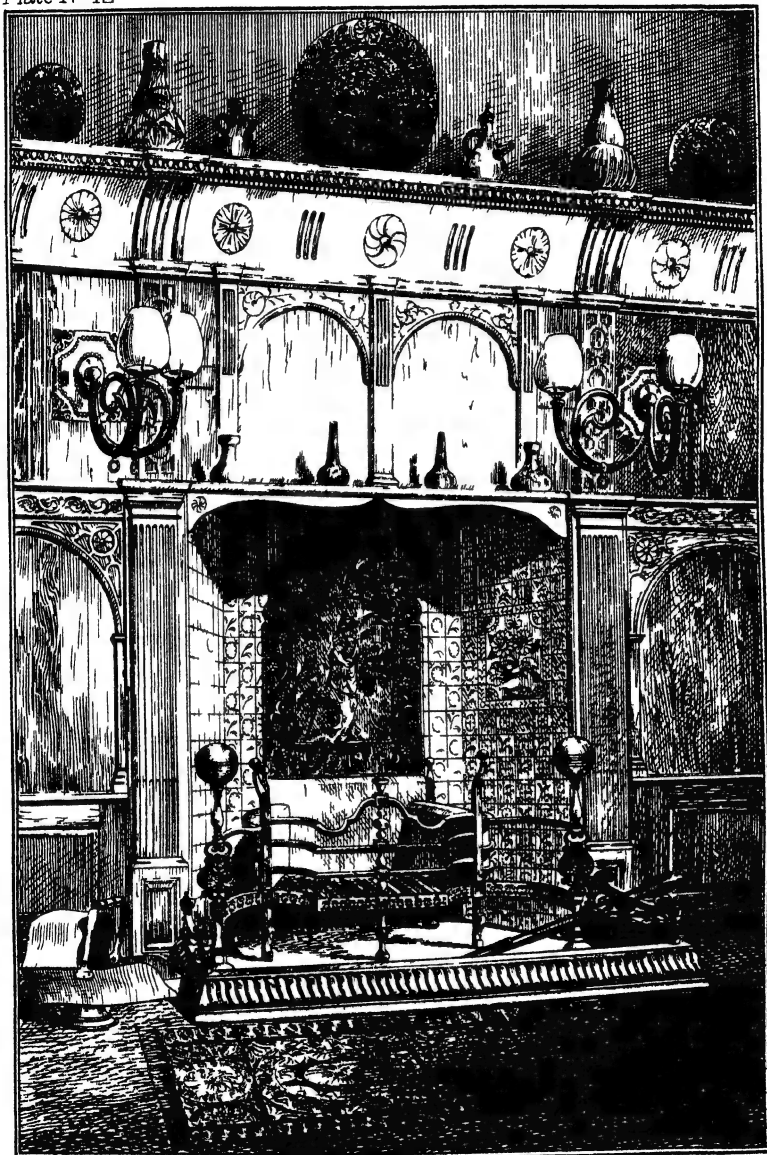
The slow combustion grates are now well known, and need no words of mine to recommend their adoption. Those made by Messrs. Barnard, at Norwich, and designed by Mr. Jekyll, the architect, are not only exceedingly good in their artistic treatment, but good in their construction and scientific arrangement for throwing out the greatest amount of heat at the smallest expenditure of coal. They consist of a plain cast ornamental front, with fire-lump back, sides, and bottom, by which the heat of the fire is retained and cast out into the room, instead of, as a rule, going up the chimney. The fire space is made as small as possible, consistent with the requirements of the grate, and by the use of tiles, the whole effect of these grates, and of others of similar character and design, made by

other equally good manufacturers, is eminently pleasant and artistic, and the cost is exceedingly moderate ; good grates of artistic design being obtainable at prices varying from 25s. to 50s. each, according to the size of the room and the space required to be heated ; the tiles and fixing, including taking out the old stove, would cost probably an equal amount of money, so that from 50s. to 5*l.* a good useful and artistic grate may be obtained for any room in the house ; and I venture to say that the saving in labour of cleaning, and consumption of coal, would amply repay the cost of the new grate in the length of an ordinary lease of seven years ; so that, even if you treat the new work as a fixture to be given to your landlord, you will have recouped yourself the original cost, in addition to the pleasure and charm of not only having an artistic grate in appearance, but one which will add extra warmth and comfort to your rooms. These grates are now made by a number of the best manufacturers, and, if the simple iron fronts are too plain for you, they can be obtained in bronze or brass at, of course, an increased cost ; and good pattern tiles can be got, for filling up the sides, from 1s. to 5s. each.

I have before mentioned the simple grate lent me by Messrs. Longden as good in design and cheap in

price ; the illustrations (Plates XII. and XIII.) show examples of two or three basket-grates by the same firm, of good artistic design and moderate cost, suitable for dining or drawing-rooms. These grates are adapted from old examples of dog-grates by Mr. Longden, and are especially good in design, the workmanship of wrought-iron and brass is as good as it can be, and no pains have been spared to produce really good artistic grates, suitable for modern requirements, at a moderate cost. They are fitted to burn wood or coal, and can be removed, if desired, in the summer-time, or fitted up with baskets of ferns or flowers. The fender shown on Plate XIII., designed by Mr. Bodley the architect, and the repoussé brass or copper sconce designed by Mr. Somers Clarke, are both charming in design and effective in treatment.

Dog-grates as now made cost no more than the usual elaborate bright steel and ormolu drawing-room grates, and are eminently adapted for the dining or drawing-room, burning either wood or coal, and being in all respects more artistic and more comfortable, not only from the general character of their design, but from the extra warmth they throw out, than the old-fashioned grates I have referred to. The openings of the existing fire-places can be easily altered to



Domestic-Iron & Brass Work

Messrs Longden & Co<sup>y</sup>



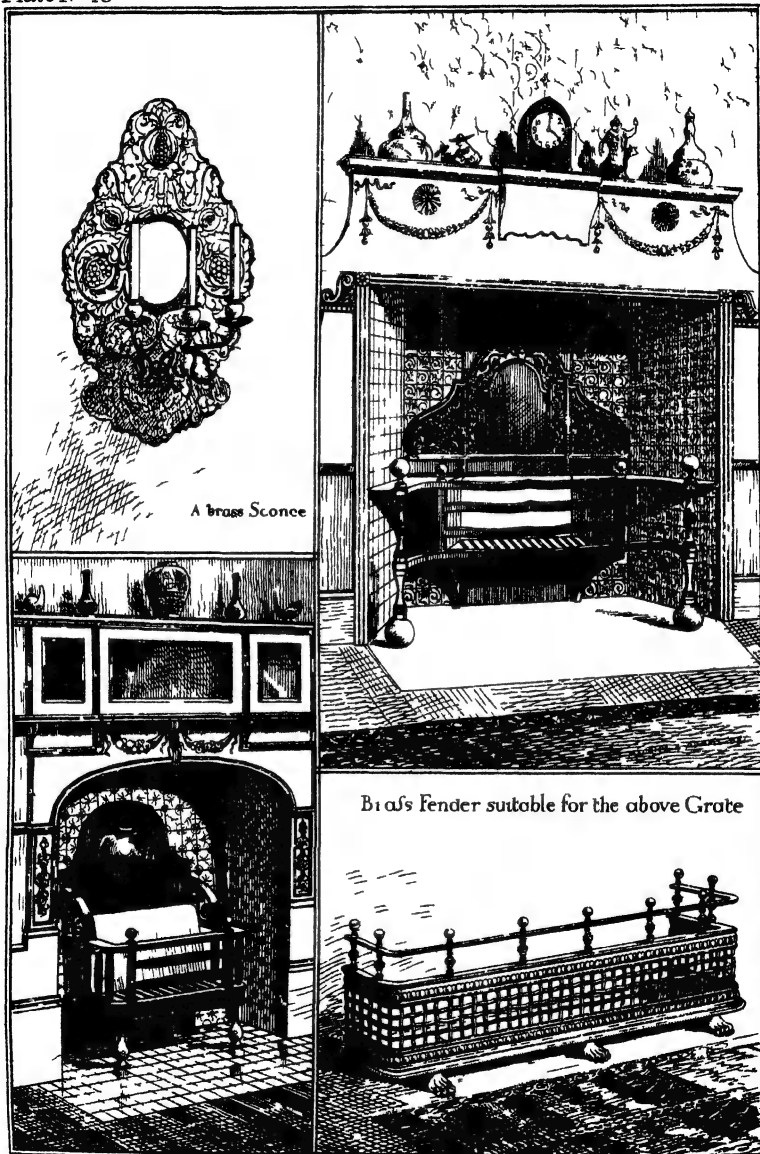
suit any of these kind of grates, and if lined all round with plain red, or other tiles, the effect in the room will be pleasant and artistic, and the tiles, by reflecting the heat, will add much to the warmth and comfort of the room, while in the summer time the grate might be removed and the space filled up with ferns and flowers. In my own house I have adopted this kind of fire-place and grate for my drawing-rooms, and am quite satisfied with the result from an artistic, useful, and economical point of view. I do not hesitate, therefore, to advise the substitution of the grates I have referred to, for the general bad and extravagant examples to be found in most town houses, without fear of being told that I am departing from my first principles of usefulness, simplicity, and moderation of cost. The examples of old Sussex cast-iron backs still left to us can be easily fitted with plain iron baskets; these backs, as a rule, being admirable examples of low relief cast ornament, generally good in artistic design and treatment.

Amongst the general articles of furniture associated with modern fire-places, nothing can be worse than the hideous and commonplace fenders of cast-iron or burnished steel, with ormolu enrichments laid on, which are either constantly coming unscrewed, or

offering traps for the destruction of ladies' dresses by their projecting points and so-called ornaments ; beyond all this, they are a constant source of annoyance, by collecting dust and dirt in their scroll-pattern angles, and under the raised iron or steel bottoms. They are, if of steel, elaborately burnished and chased, eminently costly, and involve a large expenditure of time and trouble,—equally with the grate of similar character,—to keep clean. My advice to you is to get rid of them at once, sell them for what they will fetch, and in lieu of what at its best is a clumsy and inartistic protection from the falling cinders and hot ashes, substitute plain polished marble or hard stone fenders. These can be made at prices varying from 50s. to 5*l.* or 6*l.*, are for all practical purposes better than the miserable burnished steel or iron fenders, are not likely to get in the way of dresses, with ordinary fair treatment are not likely to get chipped or broken, and are much more pleasant and artistic to look at. Only take care that they are not made of the usual section, that is to say, with a face at right angles to the hearth, rendering it difficult to properly brush out the dust and dirt from the angles. Let the section be curved or splayed down gradually to the hearth surface, so as to, in fact, form only a moulded frame, without offering







A Brass Sconce

Brass Fender suitable for the above Grate

any corners or right angles for the collection of dirt.

Fire-irons should be as plain as possible, their purpose being eminently for use, not show, and these can be supported either on the marble fender or on plain simple moveable stands, and are better than all the twisted forms and all the pierced pattern abominations which make up the general Birmingham patterns of these necessary articles of furniture.

If you object to marble or stone fenders, I suggest that instead of all the bad cast-iron and ormolu ornamentation, you should have a simply designed high fender, such as that shown in Plate XIII., say 2 feet high, made of plain wrought-iron bars, and filled in with pierced brass work, by which means you will obtain not only additional protection, but in part a useful screen from the fire.

If only an additional protection be required, I suggest a moveable screen about 2 feet high, made with a plain polished wrought-iron or steel frame, with good ornamental terminals, and filled in with brass or steel wire netting, to stand inside the marble fender. In this way protection is obtained from the fire surface in the grate without materially interfering with the heat thrown into the room.

In this my third lecture I have endeavoured to throw out some suggestions for obtaining art furniture suitable for modern uses, modern requirements, and moderate purses, and to insist that the aim of all true artists should be to produce furniture at a moderate cost, beautiful in design, detail, and form, for every-day use. It is not necessary for you to enter into the theories and speculations of all the various art teachers of the day, or to follow in the footsteps of those who, in the shortness of a life, change from Classic to Gothic, from Gothic to Queen Anne. You will be bewildered by the various enunciated opinions of a host of rival artistic authorities, all advocating the infallibility of their own particular theories on art and its accessories. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the professors of the master arts of architecture and painting should have, in the last half-century, by constant change of fashion, and so-called revival of different schools, set an example of uncertainty and dogmatism, which naturally bewilder the onlooker. As a writer in a recent number of the 'Times' very truly said :—

'Incredulity naturally supervenes when our guides only serve to show us how to abandon one standard of beauty and take up with another, for the mind of the ordinary man is not nimble enough to live in a few years through as many centuries.'

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Now, therefore, that the best of our cabinet-makers have, for the most part, shown a desire to substitute general simplicity of form and detail for extravagance and eccentricity of design and construction, let us hope that in their conscientious endeavours to produce things artistic, they will, in the general articles of domestic use, seek to combine comfort and utility with soundness of construction, simplicity of design, and moderation of cost. May I say to you, who have so patiently listened to my address, that everything in your houses should first of all be 'fitted for a place, and subordinated to a purpose,' all forming part of a great and harmonious whole, in companionship and accord, not in opposition and discord, with the beautiful things with which so many of you delight to fill your houses, and that in thus making them beautiful and attractive you are imperceptibly exercising an influence for good, upon all who see them, stronger than any words, and that the teaching of the art-work in your homes will speak in language at once powerful and intelligible to your fellow-workers in the world, who will remember and delight in the work which your loving thought and care have placed around them, for long years after you perhaps have sunk into oblivion and death of the past.

## LECTURE IV.

THE ENTRANCE-HALL, STAIRCASE, DINING-ROOM,  
AND LIBRARY.

IN the present lecture I propose offering some practical suggestions for the decoration and furniture of the entrance-hall, staircase, dining-room, and library, and to point out how they may be artistically arranged and decorated with the materials at hand, and at little, if any, greater cost than when done in the usual tasteless manner.

The planning arrangements and heights of the various rooms must first of all be considered, before any opinion can be given as to the proper proportionate division of the wall spaces; various requirements need various treatments, and what may be fitted for one room may be utterly out of place in another.

As a rule, however, in the larger rooms of a house, I think it will be found desirable to break the

surface of the walls, by means of divisional lines, into dados and friezes, either for useful or decorative purposes, or both.

In speaking of a dado, I mean, of course, the lower space, which in olden days was represented by wood panelling, the frieze being the upper portion of the wall space next the ceiling, and what I call the general wall surface, ~~the~~ central space between the dado and the frieze.

In making these divisions, the general proportion and height of the particular room must, of course, be borne in mind, as well as the practical requirements ; for instance, while, in my opinion, a good dado moulding or chair rail is desirable in a dining-room to protect the painted or papered surface from being damaged by the chair backs, which are generally placed along the wall when not required for use, in a drawing-room, where the furnishing is quite of a different character, and where the lower portion of the walls is often cut up by cabinets, bookcases, and couches, a low dado would, as a rule, be out of place, as materially interfering with the lines of furniture.

A frieze, as a rule, will be found useful in every room of the house ; in the reception-rooms for general decorative treatment, and in the bedrooms for plain

surfaces of distemper colouring for health's sake and economy of treatment.

The dado can be formed by means of a simple moulded deal rail about 3 to 4 inches wide, projecting sufficiently to act as a stop to the chair backs, and fixed to the wall about 2 feet 9 inches from the floor: the frieze should be divided again from the general wall surface or central space, by another flat deal rail, which need not be moulded at all, its purpose being not only to divide the frieze from the central wall space, but to act as a picture rail or rod, from which the pictures should be suspended, instead of, as usually done, from a rod under the cornice, thus breaking the whole of the upper portion of the wall with lines of cord or wire, which are always ugly, in the way, and utterly unnecessary. Either of these rails can be put up at the cost of a few pence per foot run, and both will be found essentially useful as well as ornamental, the one for a protection to the walls, the other for hanging pictures and other works of art.

I have purposely given to these Lectures the distinctive title of 'Town Houses,' because, although many of my remarks will naturally apply to houses in the country, the planning of town houses must of necessity be totally different.



The general arrangement consists, as a rule, of a narrow entrance-hall, widened out to make room for the staircase, which stares you in the face as you enter, two or more rooms on a floor, lighted from back or front. The external architecture is, probably, of very commonplace character, generally dressed up in miserable cement imitation of stone, with stuck-on ornaments of the worst possible character.

Internally, the rooms are without bays or recesses, with flat ceilings, cornices of the usual stereotyped form, mantels and grates of no particular design, the one heavy with gigantic trusses, the other resplendent with burnished steel and ormolu.

The doors are four panel, with weedy-looking mouldings; the windows filled with plate-glass, and the general lines and details of the rooms suggestive of anything but harmonious decoration. The clauses of the every-day lease, which necessitate the painting, papering, and whitewashing once within a certain period, will enable you, if you will, to substitute artistic for commonplace decoration; to paper your walls, and paint your doors and other woodwork, at little or no greater cost than that of the flock or imitation *moiré* silk papers, and imitation graining, so

much affected in later years; while the change in carpets, hangings, and furniture, rendered necessary by wear and tear, will enable you to replace the bad and ugly with what shall be in good taste and pleasant to look upon, or at least inoffensive. Depend upon it, the first really beautiful thing you buy—whether it be an inlaid cabinet, a picture, or a piece of painted china—with a real appreciation and love for it as a work of art, and that to you, ‘as a thing of beauty is a joy for ever,’ will be the commencement of an art teaching which will eventually lead you to discard the things which you formerly looked upon as fitting; and, the eye once educated, will make you surround yourselves with only those things which shall have some beauty of form or colour. I cannot understand how any one who truly appreciates a beautiful painting, piece of sculpture, or drawing, can conscientiously, or with any pleasure, permit in the same room other elements which are absolutely not only incongruous, but ugly; not only unartistic, but vulgar and commonplace. I can, of course, understand, although I cannot appreciate, the pride which desires simply to express power of wealth in valuable paintings; but I cannot believe there can be any real love for the art expressed in them, or just appreciation of their distinc-

tive merits, if all the surroundings are commonplace and inharmonious.

Before discussing the special arrangement of individual rooms, let me say something about the cost of the various modes of decoration I propose to recommend, and of their special application.

A few general hints as to paint, paper, and distemper work will assist you in arriving at something like the cost of the work you propose to do, and in your dealings with the workman you may employ. A little knowledge is said to be a dangerous thing, but I fancy that if you can show that you know something about the proper cost of papering, painting, and distemping, you will be in a better position to decide as to what shall be done, and how far the means at your disposal will admit of any higher class of decoration in any of your rooms.

English papers differ from French by being made 21 inches instead of 18 inches in width. French papers contain only 9 yards in the piece, as against 12 yards of English, so that, allowing 1 yard in each piece for waste, a piece of English paper of 12 yards in length will cover about 6 square yards of wall surface, as against 4 to 4½ square yards of French. The cost of hanging ordinary papers,

exclusive of the papers themselves, varies from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per piece, increasing to 2*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* per piece for better class papers, in which there is much gold—a greater amount of care and time being required for these—to 4*s.* and 5*s.* per piece for flock-papers, all of which have to be trimmed with a knife, a much longer proceeding than the usual one of trimming the edges or cutting off the waste pieces with a pair of scissors.

Lining papers, for walls and ceilings, cost from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a piece, hung complete. These, as a rule, are only necessary where the general surface of the walls is very rough and uneven, and where it is intended to paint or distemper the whole surface, and in ceilings, where the plaster work is bad or defective or much cracked; the cost of what is technically called ‘washing and stopping,’ which means cleaning off the old distemper, and cutting out, filling in, and rubbing down all cracks in old ceilings, must depend entirely upon how much of this making good has to be done, but with ordinary walls or ceilings the cost of this, including plain sizing and distemping, varies from 3*d.* to 6*d.* per square yard, all stencil decoration and picking in of cornices with colours involving, of course, extra expense. Plain cornices can be tinted in

two or three different colours from 2*d.* to 3*d.* a yard run, picking out the enrichments being a matter of time, for which a good decorator or painter would be paid at the rate of about 10*s.* per day.

The cost of plain painting to walls, and bringing them up to a good surface in three or four coats, varies from 1*s.* 9*d.* to 2*s.* 3*d.* a yard, with an extra 1*s.* a yard for varnishing. As a rule, few old walls will stand being varnished, the finishing of the plasterwork not being sufficiently smooth or level, for it must be remembered that varnish brings out all imperfections in a most decisive manner.

The cost of stopping and plain painting in three or four coats, for the margins or general surfaces of floors, varies from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* a yard, finished complete, with an extra cost of from 3*d.* to 6*d.* per yard for varnishing; good floors may be finished with a mixture of beeswax and turpentine, which forms a good polished surface, for about 1*s.* 6*d.* per yard superficial; this requires simply to be kept clean with a duster or rubbed up as ordinary furniture.

The cost of the cheapest ordinary Brussels carpet,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a yard wide only, is at least 5*s.* 6*d.* per yard run, or practically nearly 7*s.* a square yard, exclusive of laying; you will see, therefore, that, in strongly advo-

cating painted or stained and varnished borders as more healthy and artistic, I am advocating a treatment of floor surfaces infinitely less expensive than covering them with carpets.

Japanning or lacquer painting is a term applied to painting in which varnish, to a large extent, forms the vehicle or medium with which the colour is mixed. This, when properly done, produces an appearance of lacquered or polished surface, and can be applied to all kinds of furniture of cheap woods with good effect, at about one-half extra cost over that of plain painting.

In this kind of varnishing the room must be kept at a high temperature, so as to admit of the varnish drying rapidly and becoming hard, as in ordinary japanning or furniture painting.

In enamelling woodwork, this kind of varnish paint is used, but the work is carefully rubbed down after each coat, and much labour is required to bring the ultimate result to the enamel-like effect of good coach painting; this kind of work is necessarily expensive, and the result not always satisfactory.

It is well to remember that different materials need different treatments, and much depends on the nature and appearance of the work to be painted; delicate tints require colourless oil for their vehicle, surfaces

required to be finished in flat must have no oil at all, as the use of it necessarily imparts a gloss and shining surface which, in flatted work, is to be avoided ; paint mixed with turpentine is not nearly as lasting as that mixed with oil, but a little turpentine is necessary in all work exposed to the sun, either inside or out, to prevent the paint from blistering, and, as a rule, where you find shutter fronts and other painting in the window openings blistered, you may be sure that the work has been improperly done. It is possible, however, that this may not always be due to improper work ; for, if the aspect of the room be east or west, and the new work is exposed to the glare of a hot sun, any ordinary painting or varnishing on deal or pitch-pine is almost sure to blister, and should always be protected, until quite hard and dry, by blinds or other covering ; bad knots should always be cut out in all shutter fronts or other work where much exposed to the sun. The silicate paints now made, which for their bases have pure calcined silica, are said to stand any fair amount of heat without blistering, and, weight for weight, to cover at least a third more wall space than ordinary oil paints, both valuable recommendations for their more extensive adoption for every-day use.

I have thus briefly given some few practical hints, which those who are about to paint or decorate will, I think, find useful. As I proceed with my lecture, I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to give some idea of the cost of the decorations I suggest in the various rooms, namely, the hall, staircase, dining-room, and library.

Let us suppose that the street-door—which should be painted in some warm, serviceable colour, either chocolate or brown, and varnished for protection against the weather and to render it easily cleaned—is opened, and we are in the hall, the antechamber of the house. Here the walls should be painted with some good colour—not too light to show finger marks—to two-thirds of their height, with some simple pattern stencilled over the surface, but, if possible, varied—that is to say, light upon dark and dark upon light—and the whole carefully varnished, not only to protect the paint, but to render the walls easily cleaned without damage. The stencil work may be done in a darker or lighter shade of the general tint; and here and there a panel might be formed, in which a figure might be painted in outline, or stencilled on. It is well, however, to remember that figurework must be done by an artist who knows from long study how to draw



the human form, for any feeble prettiness of figure-drawing, such as we see so often in the panels of modern furniture and on tiles, is worse than nothing; and it is better to have a good conventional flower, well drawn, than any pretence of figurework, which, after a time, when you have learnt to appreciate and know what good drawing is, will disgust you. The upper portion of the walls should be divided by a plain wood moulding, which, if desired, can be formed into a narrow shelf, on which to place light pieces of majolica or *grès de Flandres*, or other ware. Drawings, or anything hung on the walls, as a rule, are generally in the way, and are liable to blow about and damage the paint and decoration. The space under the cornice so divided might be distempered; for where gas is used this portion of the wall is likely to get dirty or discoloured in a year, and the distemper can be washed off or re-done at a small cost.

In the frieze might be panels containing birds and figures, which could be done in distemper with good effect, the general drawing being done in plain red outline, contrasting well with a cream-coloured general tone of ground. Panels of figure tiles, or such as those shown in Plate IV., which last for ever, or a plain running stencil pattern of foliage, shields, and birds,

as an enriched border just below the cornice, might be judiciously introduced, or a good light-toned and simple pattern, or stamped paper, such as those I described in my second lecture, may be hung over the whole space instead of distemper. This stencil decoration may be done very inexpensively, for when once the patterns are cut out—and these may be as many or as few as you like—the mere skill and labour required is of very ordinary kind for simple work of this description. Decorative wreaths of one or two colours, and pots of flowers or foliage sufficiently large to form a good decorative frieze in distemper colouring, may be done from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a yard run, and the patterns may be kept, so that the work may be renewed, if necessary, each year, or changed with new patterns, which can be cut out at a very small expenditure of time and money. The ceiling should be lightly tinted in a vellum, pink, or grey tone, with some slight stencil decoration to relieve it, and the cornice treated in very light shades in distemper.

Remember these ceilings are certain in a little space to get dingy from ordinary town atmosphere, and the wretched impurities of gas. It is unfortunate that in this nineteenth century we are still obliged to burn gas which is generally impure and a disgrace to

modern science and civilisation. Consumers are made to pay a large price for this kind of light, and ought fairly to expect to be supplied with it free from all those impurities, which tend to destroy, not only the painting and decoration on our walls, but all pictures, gilding, and other works of the kind which are left unprotected by glass. At a little extra cost, plain deal or canvas plaster ribs might be laid over the existing plaster work, and the panels thus formed could be filled in with good flock paper to relieve the general flatness of the surface, and could be painted whenever required, or the whole surface may be covered with canvas plaster in a delicate all-over pattern of naturalistic or conventional leaf ornament cast in low relief, the ground work being tinted golden-yellow colour.

Another treatment of the walls of the outer hall would be by panelling them 6 or 7 feet high in plain deal, painted in red or dark blue lacquer colour, and with a good flock-paper frieze, painted light-golden yellow, flecked with reddish or brighter golden touches, to relieve it from the general sameness which one tint presents when not brightened up by decoration. Flock or stamped papers in small friezes of this kind, especially if painted, can be used with good effect, and sometimes the pattern will permit of some particular

portion of it being picked out in a different tone of colour ; but in any treatment of this kind great care must be taken to prevent a spotty appearance.

Marble mosaic tiles or slabs may also be used with good effect on the walls of the outer hall, at a cost varying from 5s. to 20s. per square yard. The effect of these are generally satisfactory, and, the surface being polished, is easily cleaned, and is not affected by changes of weather or atmosphere. The woodwork should be painted throughout in two plain colours, with the mouldings strengthened in darker tone, and the whole varnished ; if the mullions and framing of the door be done in a dark shade, let us say of chocolate or brown, the panels might be lighter in tone, with stencil decoration of flowers, birds, or fruit in a darker shade. Here let me say that all woodwork, such as doors, windows, and shutters, which are subject to the wear of not always clean hands, should be varnished throughout ; the extra cost of this will be saved by the increased time which the paint and decoration will stand, and plain washing with a damp cloth or sponge will at all times clean off any and all marks. In my own house this kind of work has stood for nearly ten years, and is to-day as fresh as when it was done. Do not be led away by the theory that varnish will destroy the

delicacy of colour ; of course, care must be taken in the tints you wish to arrive at, by increasing or toning the colours to meet the glaze which varnish gives. Where an inner screen is really used, that is, kept shut to keep the inner hall more private, it should be glazed with leaded or jewelled glass, instead of the ordinary embossed plate or enamelled sheet glass ; simple designs in colour can be introduced at small cost, say from 2s. to 6s. per square foot, according to the design or pattern of the work, and will add much to the cheerfulness of the hall, with the play of sunlight through the various tinted glass.

It is not necessary to say that the fashion of small or leaded panes of glass has been much abused, but in such places as hall screens, where additional privacy is desired, they may legitimately be used. To ignore the advantages of modern plate glass in ordinary windows, where light and outlook are desired, is simply ridiculous ; but I see no reason why the upper portions of the windows of town houses may not have figure or flower designs of leaded glass panelled or framed into smaller white-leaded panes, as in most of our larger commercial towns the sky is too often of a gloomy aspect, and when the sun does pay its visits to our streets and squares, it will not be the less appreciated because

it comes through painted glass, and adds to its charms the beauties of many glinted colours. The mantel-piece of an ordinary hall is generally so common, and the hall so narrow, that a shelf is almost useless. Why not, therefore, discard it altogether, and frame the grate by a border of tiles, kept in by a slight wood moulding? Messrs. Minton and Co., and other manufacturers, have numerous examples of good art tiles suitable for this purpose, from 1s. to 5s. each.

In Plate XIV. I give examples of various tiles made by this firm, which are eminently adapted for the lining of fire-places or as borders for mantel-pieces; the small 6-inch tiles can be obtained in plain blue and white or buff tone colouring for 1s. each, the larger plaques, which are painted in outline on pale buff ground with delicate tones of darker yellow and pink, about 3 feet 4 inches high by 18 inches wide in single slabs, costing about 5*l.* each.

If you wish for places for china, have plain painted deal shelves, made in groups, gradually diminishing from the lower to the upper shelf, and fixed above the mantel-piece. Do not, as is so often done, cover the mantel-shelf with a wooden top, covered with cloth or velvet, nailed on with a fringe and brass nails; this will be an endless source of annoyance, from the fact



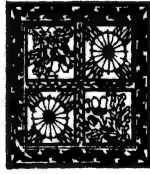
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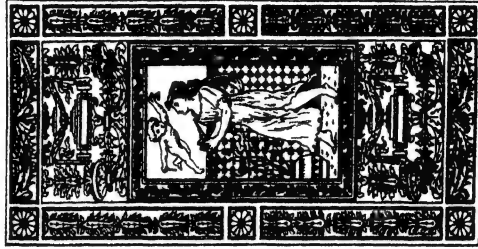
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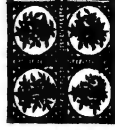
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MAURICE B. ADAMS DEL.

EXAMPLES A B C D E F G H I J DESIGNED BY R. W. EDIS F.S.A

Domestic Tiles and Tile Decoration

MINTON AND Co.





that it never can be kept free from dirt and dust, not to say anything of its spotty and unartistic effect. There are, of course, endless other ways of decorating a hall, by panelling the lower portion with tiles or wood, and filling up above with a good pattern paper of light tone, or painted decoration. Simple distemper work, if well done, may be used instead of paint, and is of course much less expensive. A good bright reddish-brown tone on the lower portion of the walls, with yellowish cream ground above, with enriched panels and cornice, can all be done in distemper, and if brushed down occasionally with a light brush will remain good and effective for some years. As a rule, the floors of the halls of most town houses are of stone, and these, if kept clean and whitened, form very good borders for bright Persian or Indian rugs, which can now be obtained at a very moderate cost, or the stone floor may have a border of plain marble or mosaic work, such as I have described in my lecture on floor decoration. A good 'Kurd' mat or rug, about 6 feet long by 3 feet 6 inches wide, may be obtained for 10s. or 15s., and its bright colour gives a cheerful warm look to the hall as you enter. The door-mat should be sunk flush with the floor, and of large size, so that little or no dirt may be

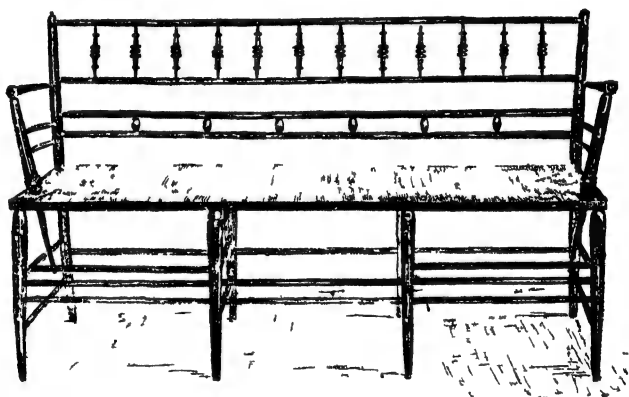
carried on to the rug. 'Mischiata,' or marble mosaic, forms an excellent pavement, and, although more expensive, is preferable to the everlasting tile floors, which have been imitated *ad nauseam* in oilcloth. If tiles are used, they should be in one good colour ; say red, grey, or chocolate, with a very simple border ; or white and black tiles, in 2 inch squares, laid to a bold pattern and divided into squares, and bordered by thin black lines, look well, and are easily cleaned.

In the ordinary hall of a town house there is not much room for furniture of any kind, but there is still space for one or two high-backed chairs of plain oak, or a long deal settle with plain rail back and elbows, and for a small stand for wet umbrellas ; this latter need not be one of the usual cast-iron abominations, but can be incorporated with the seat with a zinc tray at the bottom and a carved brass rail at top. Messrs. Morris have designed a plain rush-bottomed settle, shown in the accompanying sketch, 4 feet 6 inches long, which is quite good enough for any ordinary hall, and costs only 35s. complete.

If possible, in the inner hall there should be a simple cupboard with sliding, not folding, doors, with shelves arranged for coats, and a sliding rack for hats, a few

hooks or pegs above for sticks and umbrellas, and the top may be made of unpolished oak or other hard wood, or marble, to act as a serving table.

'Portières' in London halls are generally objectionable as offering traps for dirt and dust. On the landings I would have a comfortable divan or stuffed seat of the plainest description—throw a piece of coloured



•stuff or silk over it for colour—which will be found convenient and useful on occasions when you receive guests ; at each end might be arranged receptacles for plants and flowers, which are always grateful and pleasant to look at.

The staircase of a town house is generally a cold and dreary approach to the real withdrawing or living rooms of the house—the rooms where we receive our

guests and spend our pleasantest hours—often a long vault, walled in with blocks of imitation marble, a cold stone staircase, with cast-iron balustrading of the worst possible design—generally imitative of wrought-iron construction—thin, poor, and often unsafe, with a thin moulded handrail, with what are technically called ramps, wreaths, and curtains of the usual speculative builder's character. Of course all these must remain. We cannot exchange them for the wide oak staircase, with its boldly carved newels, handrails that look like support, and handsomely turned balusters of Elizabethan date ; such, indeed, as are still left in numerous old English mansions, and in some few of the older London houses ; but we can make them more cheerful, and less cold and dull. A painted and varnished dado, with a wooden moulding raking with the handrail, or plain deal painted panelling, will be at once a help and improvement. The wretched ironwork painted in a plain bright colour—not picked out in gold, to show its peculiar eccentricities and faults of design—and the thin moulding which serves as a handrail, ebonised as a contrast, will all help the peculiarly unfortunate lines on which you have to work. Above the dado, either distemper or paper in some warm and cheerful colour. If you paper, let the paper

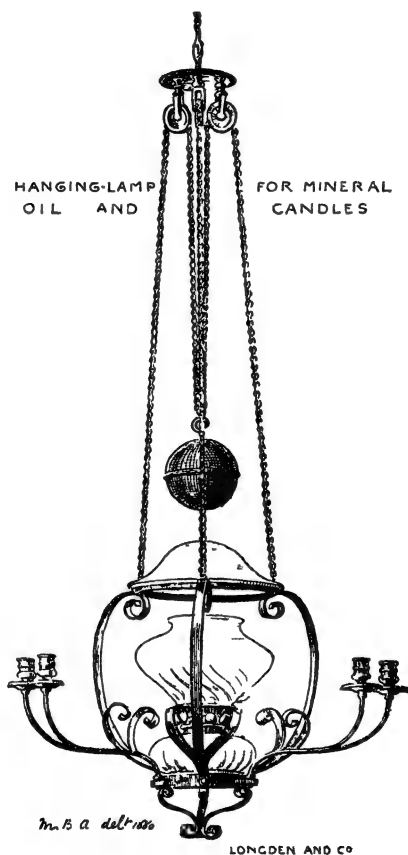
be of one general tone, otherwise the great space to be covered will be spotty and disagreeable.

As an example of paper decoration for inner halls and staircases, I have shown in the illustration Plate III. one made by Messrs. Jeffrey, and designed by Mr. Walter Crane, which is certainly quaint and clever in its treatment, and suitable for the purpose, although somewhat expensive. The general ground is of a soft yellow tone, with deeper toned decoration in lines and patterns, and diapered over with dark wall flowers. The upper portion or frieze has a ground of delicate blue, and is covered with pale pink almond flowers. The whole treatment is exceedingly decorative and well executed; the lower portion might be varnished, so as to be easily washed.

A warm golden-brown or yellow forms a good general tone for a hall and staircase, with a Pompeian-red dado painted, with black skirting and rail, and a frieze of light pattern paper or cream-coloured distemper ground, with line enrichment in dark golden brown or red. The general woodwork should be painted black, where there is not too much of it, or in two shades of good red or brown, or the general tone might be peacock or light blue, with soft vellum grey and blue pattern papers or distemper. A deep frieze

of boldly designed painted or stencil ornament will assist much in breaking the usual bad proportion of the staircase wall, while panels may be formed in bold lines of paint or distemper, wherein may be framed pictures or other art work. A good neutral tint or warm grey ground, with ornament in green and vermillion, has a good effect if the colours be carefully treated; or a wide diaper, with patterns interchanged, and charged with shields and legends here and there. Any good photographs, sketches, or studies are useful to hang on the rake of the staircase, on the eye line, to take off the general coldness. Many varieties of tints will suggest themselves, which will help to give a bright and cheerful character to the passage-way of the whole house, in place of the cold and dreary, rightly called, well, to which we are so accustomed. As a rule, the lower flights of the staircase are fairly well lighted, and the walls can, therefore, be hung with drawings. If possible, put here and there a piece of china, or a good figure on brackets, in the angles, to break the ugly appearance of the narrow half-landing. A carefully designed lantern light, filled with leaded and jewelled glass, hung from the ceiling, such an one as I have shown in illustration XX. will cost no more than the miserably painted iron or bronzed brackets

which are generally affected, and will light the stairs more evenly, or a simple wrought-iron or brass



hanging lamp, similar to the sketch given of one made by Messrs. Longden and Co., with opalesque glass

receiver for oil, and brackets for candles, will certainly form a pleasant and artistic feature for lighting an inner hall or landing. A bright drugget, nearly covering the whole of the treadway, with the stone margins treated in good warm colour to harmonise with it, is surely better than the narrow three-quarter width carpet, with its edges of cold painted stone; while here and there, on the landings and half-spaces, small Persian or Indian rugs or prayer carpets—which can be bought for almost the price of the carpet usually used—will give colour and brightness, and add to the feeling of warmth and comfort; and these, always remember, can be taken up easily, and shaken, if requisite, every day, and are certainly more cleanly than the closely fastened down carpet, under which the dust accumulates and stays for many months. If the landing or half-space be large, put a comfortably low couch, with some bright covering, and a stand for flowers or china; for any bit of colour, either of nature or art, will add much to the cheerfulness of this part of the house.

Nowadays, the art of China and Japan is well known to all of us, and, although I do not for a moment advocate any mere copyism of oriental work in the decoration of English houses, yet there is much in good Chinese and Japanese art which we may study with



advantage. In painting on china and *faïence*, in every kind of decorative art, the Japanese show a keen love for, and an intimate knowledge of, all that is beautiful in Nature, and are always at their best in depicting her ever-varied form, whether in flowers, tree, or animal life. With a few exquisite touches the loveliest forms are placed before us, with great truth and freedom of drawing, and in their art there is a desire to set forth beautiful designs, and to express lovely combinations of colour in ever-varying fancy. They always seem to remember that all true decoration is based on construction, that the life and flower, so to speak, of decorative work must spring from the root and framework of construction ; just as a good painter will draw his figure first, before clothing it, and the trunk and branches of a tree before covering it with foliage. What can be more exquisite than some of the drawing and colouring of the innumerable paper and silk blinds and fans that have been imported to such a large extent in the last few years ? Many of these can be bought for a few shillings, and are admirable pieces of colour decoration to hang on the walls of hall or staircase, or framed in small panels round the frieze. The colouring is generally quiet and refined in treatment, and eminently decorative, and at the same time perfectly true to

nature. Where an ordinary workman would conventionalise a flower or bird, and produce whole rows of them, without variation of any kind, in a stiff and unnatural manner, these Japanese artists give us endless variety and colouring, always graceful and effective, and never crude or coarse. By a few touches they produce Nature in life and movement—a tree bent and shaken by the wind, a blade of grass bent or broken by some passing footstep, a spray of flowers waving with the summer breeze ; birds in endless movement, flying or asleep, and all true to the characteristics of their life and form. In the lily, the carnation, convolvulus, fruit, or May blossoms, we see numerous examples of our own English flowers, depicted in a way which few decorative artists in England can equal or excel. All such bits of decorative art can be made much of in the dull monotony of a town house, and nowadays can be purchased at a very trifling cost. If you will only trace, or get traced, some of the outline sketches of wild fowl, cocks and hens, pheasants, or storks, you will find they can be used with good effect as stencil decoration for the upper portion of the staircase walls, or in smaller scale for panels of doors, shutters, and other woodwork, which, as a rule, are left untouched. For instance, suppose you have the

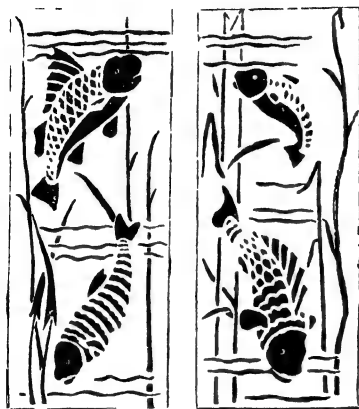
usual four-panel doors common to most of our houses, with mouldings run round of no particular design, I would suggest that you should paint them in two shades of colour to harmonise or contrast with the paper on the walls, the panels being the lighter shade, and on these stencil some of the designs I have alluded to in the darker shade, and then varnish the whole. As an example of simple stencil decoration for door panels I give two sketches of patterns which I have used on my own doors: these patterns are stencilled on to the light reddish brown ground in dark chocolate and then varnished over, and have



STENCIL DECORATION FOR DOOR PANELS IN TWO SHADES

lasted for ten or twelve years without requiring to be re-done. By these means you will obtain, at the cost

of a few shillings, a really good piece of decoration, which will always be pleasant to look at, instead of



ST. NIEL DEGRATION 1300 P. 100

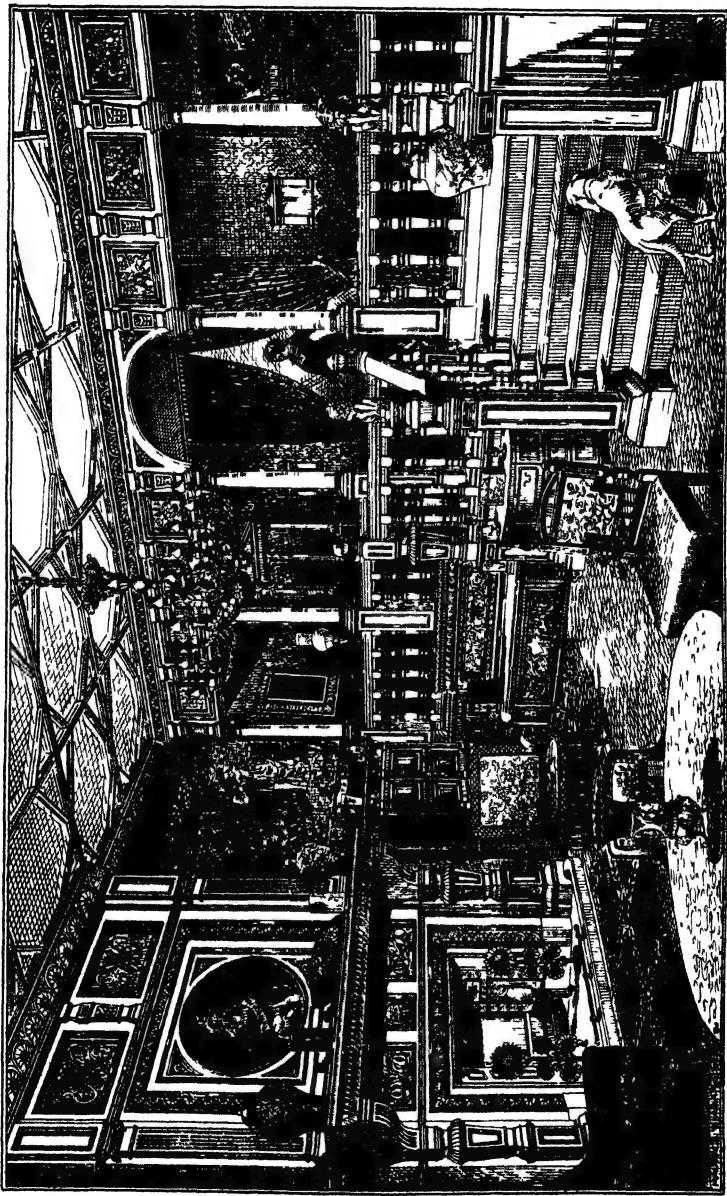
RENOU WEDS 1300 P. 100

the dull monotony of imitation graining of oak, maple, or satin wood, to which we are so much accustomed. In decorative art, we have much to learn from the artists of Japan, who for many hundreds of years seem in their humblest articles of daily use to have carried

out some impress of their love and knowledge of Nature in her most beautiful forms.

In Plate XV. I give a suggestive sketch for the treatment of a large hall, in what I may call modern Jacobean style, showing a picturesque arrangement for any large inner hall, of a modern town mansion where such a room could be made more or less a living room. Some of its features might be adopted in an ordinary hall, but I submit the sketch as a fair example of the kind of internal work suitable for the new style of architecture, yclept, for want of a better name, 'Queen Anne.' The mantel-piece and general features of the

Plate N° 15



Sketch for a Hall. *Modern Jacobean.*

Messrs Gullow and Co.



sketch were designed by Messrs. Gillow, and fitted up by them in the Prince of Wales' Pavilion in the Street of Nations at the last Paris Exhibition. The walls are shown as hung with modern Windsor tapestry and old Spanish leather, with furniture coverings and hangings of tapestry and embossed sage green velvet.

I cannot pretend to lay down any set rule for the decoration of the principal rooms of a house, nor would I if I could. The great mistake that is made nowadays by some professional decorators is fixing all design and furnishing in a room to one set rule, so that you feel on entering it that everything is stiff and formal, and intended for show, not use.

I heard recently of one of these gentlemen informing a lady of excellent taste, and who had brought into her room various bits 'of eclectic but useful furniture, that 'had he known she was going thus to interfere with his general set scheme of decoration, he would have declined to have had anything to do with the work;' a remark at once impertinent, and characteristic of the general conceit of such false teachers.

If such a room could speak, it would cry out aloud, 'Look at me; am I not an art room? But please do not bring any pretty things—any books, or any china here, or you will disturb my propriety. I am not

intended to be home-like, but artistic.' In the mansions of Hatfield, Audley End, Haddon, and Knowle, and many other old halls of England, the walls of the great rooms, as well as the entrances, and often the bedrooms, were panelled with oak, in small panels, to half or two-thirds of their height, and the remaining space covered with tapestry or stamped leather, and the effect of the rich brown oak walls with delicately carved friezes, bold and well-wrought mouldings, and panelling enriched with graceful arabesque or linen-fold design, is always charming, and contrasts well with the white ceilings panelled in fretwork, or geometrical patterns with mouldings in low relief, as in the old houses lately pulled down in Lime Street ; but all this kind of work is not suitable to the general rooms of a town house, where the dust and blacks of the too filthy town atmosphere find resting-places in every moulding and every bit of carving. In later days, these many panels were changed into what is called a 'dado' about 3 feet high, panelled lengthways. Above were larger panels running the whole length of the room, or finished with narrow carved or panelled friezes, the mouldings generally being in relief. After a time, this arrangement was found inconvenient, and the panels of the upper portion of the



walls were removed, the capping of the dado being allowed to remain as a chair-rail, and this arrangement is still to be found in many London houses.

*A propos* of the dust and smoke of towns. We pride ourselves on being a scientific nation, a practical and common-sense people, and withal patient and long-suffering in putting up with abuses, such as have no more right to exist than any other ills which are opposed to all laws—moral, hygienistic, and otherwise. I often wonder how long we shall be content to accept gas, which, from its marvellous impurity and want of lighting power, is a disgrace to any civilised country in the world; how long we shall be content to pollute the common air with smoke, and by the want of some simple scientific arrangement in our fire-places, to sow broadcast the evils which work the destruction of everything within our homes, and cover the delicate leaves of the trees in our squares, and the flowers of the earth, with black, filthy corruption, when, I take it, it is quite possible to burn all this smoke and impurity with infinite saving of cost in fuel, and manifest gain in health, comfort, and cleanliness to ourselves; how long shall we be content to allow the water supply of our towns to be the monopoly of a few companies, who limit our supply and increase the charges almost

as they please, and, as a rule, leave us, when all is said, with water the purity of which is uncertain—life-destroying rather than life-giving? Or how long shall we permit gas and water companies so to arrange their mains that any repairs or alteration involve the taking up and destruction of our street paving, instead of their being so arranged as to be got at quickly and easily without damage to our roads and paths? Or how long shall we be content to allow vestries and other local bodies to shut up main thoroughfares and alter street paving in important highways and streets, to the public loss and inconvenience, in the most busy periods of the year? Or how long shall we rest content to be behind all other civilised countries, in the arrangements for watering and cleansing our streets? These are matters which, however unartistic they may be in themselves, exercise a very great influence on the comfort and cleanliness of our homes and surroundings.

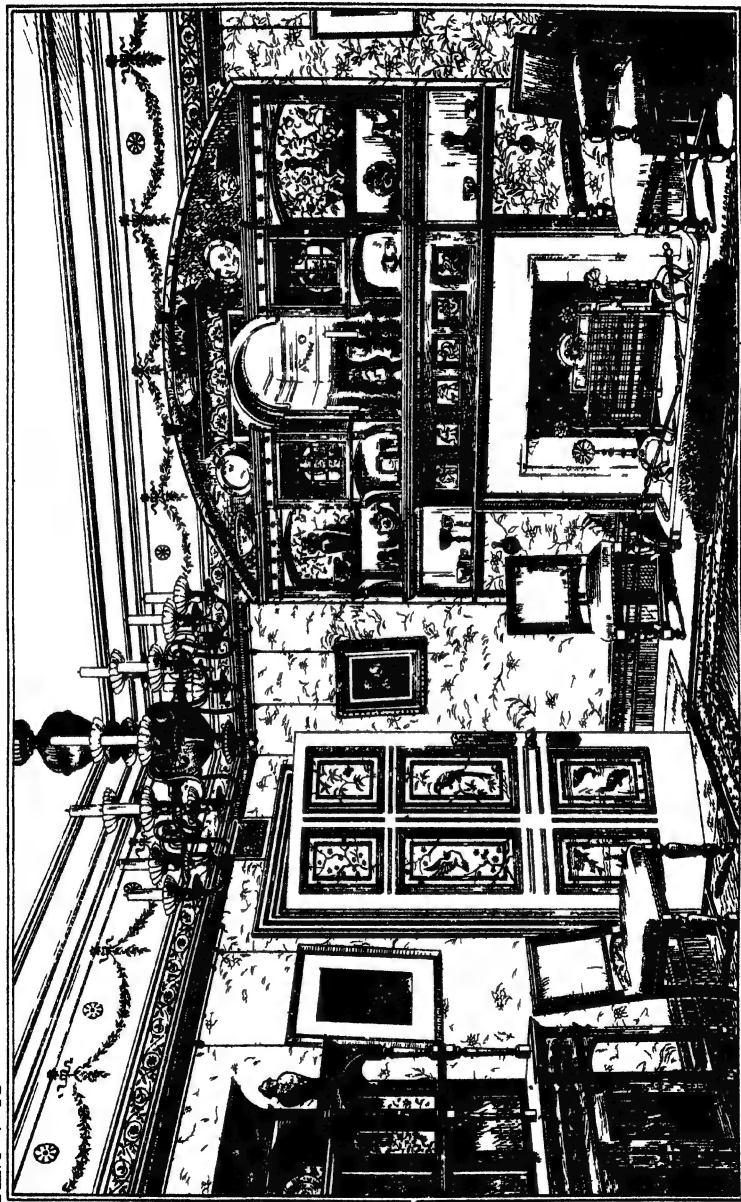
The French rarely or ever furnish their *salles à manger* or dining-rooms to any great extent. In England we use these rooms much more largely, and should make them as pleasant to look at as possible, care being taken not to hang the walls with tapestry, silk, or other stuffs, which retain the smell of food. A

painted dado of a good dark tone, with a bold chair rail to prevent the chairs damaging the walls, is generally desirable, or plain deal painted panelling to a height of 3 or 4 feet, above which the walls may be papered or painted to within 2 or 3 feet of the ceiling; the room, so divided, will give ample space for the hanging of pictures or prints; and instead of the ordinary picture rods under the cornice, with their long pendant lines of dusty cord or wire, cutting up the walls into endless queer and bad forms, a small moulding should be placed along the wall, under the frieze, into which hooks can be screwed and removed at will, or a light iron rod—ordinary  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch gas-piping will do—may form the lowermost moulding of this rail, on which any amount of pictures or drawings may be hung. If the wall is to form a background for pictures, a good warm brown or chocolate colour, in paint or distemper, will be found most effective. There are innumerable colours which can be adopted, but, for goodness' sake, avoid the dreary commonplaceness of light apple and sage greens, which seem to be the only colours thought appropriate for dining-room walls.

I give here an illustration—Plate XVI.—of a dining-room which has been lately decorated and furnished

from my own designs, as an example of simple treatment for wall decoration and furniture. In this room the mantel-piece, with the *étagère* over, is made to form an important feature of the general design ; the wall space is divided by a high dado or picture rail slightly moulded with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch gas piping under, as a picture rod. The frieze is painted in plain vellum tone of colour, and decorated with stencil pattern enrichment. The wood-work generally is of deal varnished, the panels of the doors and shutters filled in with stencil decoration in a light shade of brown under the varnish. The general wall surface is hung with an all-over pattern paper of good warm golden brown tone of colour, admirably adapted for pictures. The furniture throughout is executed in Spanish mahogany, and designed to harmonise with the general character of the decoration.

The use of what is called a flatting coat, or finishing coat, of paint mixed with turpentine only, for wall surfaces, so as to produce a dull flat or dead surface without gloss, is, I think, a mistake, for this kind of work does not last when exposed to the weather ; it shows every mark of dirt, and will not stand washing. This picture-surface, if painted, should not be varnished, but the dado and all woodwork of the doors and windows will be made much more





effective if varnished, as I have before recommended. The woodwork should be painted of similar colour, as a rule, to the walls, but of much darker tone in two shades, and the panels covered with good ornament, stencilled on, all of which is inexpensive, and adds materially to the general artistic effect. The broad frieze, above what I call the picture or general wall space, should be much lighter in tone, and here of course there is an opportunity for real art-work. A broad decorative painted frieze, painted in compartments or panels, with figure-subjects, is of course, to my mind, the most desirable finish.

I have already in my second lecture discussed this important question of high art-decoration, and I need not further refer to it except to say that for one hundred pounds, the price of a small picture or piece of really good china, you may get good painted decoration, designed and carried out by an artist, for the frieze of an ordinary dining-room, in which good figure painting, in combination with birds, foliage, or other decorative accessories, shall be carried out in oils on canvas or panel so as to be removeable at any time ; failing this, I suggest good artistic decoration in distemper or oil.

As an example of what may be done in stencil

work in oil, I have seen some designs by a practical working decorator, in which the general treatment is thoroughly artistic in its character, and free from the usual mechanical sameness of colouring, or reproduction of various cut stencil plates, in one tone or shade of tinting, and in unvaried and monotonous repetition.

In ordinary stencil decoration, the pattern is generally rubbed on in one tone of colour, and the arrangement of the design is, as a rule, a mere reproduction of parts prolonged indefinitely, according to the amount of space to be covered ; in the special work I refer to, instead of plain flat treatment of the stencil pattern, there is produced, by cleverness of handling and artistic touch, a varied tone in the different leaves and fruit forming the pattern, either by working the stencil brush very slightly over a portion of the leaf, and increasing the strength of touch and amount of colour in the lower portion, by which a pleasant gradation of colour is carried out, or by the use of two or more tints in the same leaf or flower, carefully blended at the moment, and worked off into delicately shadowed surfaces, by which an extremely good effect is obtained.

The general decorative effect is still as it should



be in this kind of work, quite flat and simple ; but infinitely greater artistic character is given to the work by the skill and feeling shown in the manipulation of the brush, and in the interchange of one or two colours, to say nothing of a fairly artistic rendering and decorative treatment of the design itself by interchanging the stencil plates, and avoiding, as far as possible, any formal repetition. I am glad to see this attempt to improve upon the ordinary mechanical work of stencilling by making it more decorative and artistic, and to feel that there are workmen who can and will carry out, as far as practicable, the views I have so strongly advocated, of making cheap decoration artistic in character and feeling.

The men who could do this kind of work could, with a little teaching, do anything in this character of decoration, and with a little extra teaching and study of good examples, would avoid the anachronisms and errors in design and treatment which, in the particular work referred to, were especially noticeable, and wherein, if anything, there was too much striving after imitation of Japanese ornament, without the knowledge of the 'motif,' or power of drawing and artistic grouping, so noticeable in the work of Japanese artists. This kind of work could be produced,

including the three or four coats of colour necessary for the groundwork, at from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* 6*d.* per square yard, so that a frieze of, say, 2 feet deep in an ordinary room of say 24 by 16, after deducting the window openings, could be done for 5*l.* or 6*l.*, about the price of good flock-paper, and when done would last for ten or fifteen years at least. In all artistic work of this kind, it must always be remembered 'that immoderate multiplicity fatigues the eye ; that excessive copiousness causes many objects to be condemned as useless ; that unity of conception, proportion of parts, and symmetry in the principal decorations are indispensable laws never to be neglected.' Raphael, carried away by the exuberance of his genius, and the skill of his pupils, squandered and wasted decoration in the Vatican, and lost the chief attributes of his ancient models—simplicity and moderation in design and treatment.

In the papering of the walls of dining-rooms and libraries, there are, of course, very many ways of treatment, and, amongst the numerous good examples of paper-hangings now made, there should be no difficulty in selecting some really good pattern, artistic in design and colouring. As I have before stated, I consider a dado a desirable basis for a dining-room, and a wide frieze a proper finish to the wall, instead of carrying up

the general tone of colour of the walls to the ceiling or cornice line ; the treatment suggests itself as infinitely better and more artistic than carrying up the same colour or decoration to the top of the room, and thus making a sudden break without any gradation of colour between it and the ceiling. If the dado is formed in stamped paper of dark colour, the general wall surface should be treated with artistic papers of green, brown, red, and blue grounds, of various shades, all adapted for backgrounds for pictures or engravings. The frieze may be in various coloured flock-papers ; the cost of these vary : the sunflower and sunflower bud flock patterns, made by Messrs. Jeffrey, both extremely decorative and good in colouring and design, are respectively 5*s.* 6*d.* and 6*s.* per yard ; the plain water-colour adaptation of the same being only 1*s.* per yard. The ' Albert Moore ' pattern, made by the same firm, either in brown and white, or blue and white, in single print and other patterns, varies from 5*s.* to 12*s.* per piece ; a dark dado papering in imitation of stamped leather costs about 5*s.* per yard, and flock pattern papers, for friezes and ceilings, from 4*s.* to 6*s.* per yard ; plain ceiling patterns, in one tone of yellow or other colour diaper, vary from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per piece.

As an example of a purely decorative paper of high artistic character, there is the 'Mermaid' paper, designed by Mr. Walter Crane, in which the dado is treated as a pebbly beach, the general surface as water with fishes swimming in it, and the frieze as mermaids rising out of the water under. There are other good examples of papers all capable of making highly artistic wall decoration ; all good in design and colouring.

In choosing paper great care should be exercised, as the colour and general appearance of most of the patterns change very greatly under gas or candle light. It is, therefore, desirable to select three or four patterns, and put them up on the walls of the room you are intending to cover, and examine their general effect carefully, by day and night, before making a final choice ; for not only do some patterns and colours materially alter by gas or candle light, but some, especially green and blue, absorb an immense amount of light, and are, therefore, not fitted for any rooms which are not strongly lighted.

Messrs. Morris and Co. are well known for the general artistic excellence of their papers and hangings, showing colours which contrast and harmonise well together, some of them especially good in design

and colouring, and inexpensive in price; the papers varying from 5s. to 12s. per piece, and the hangings of tapestry or creton from 3s. to 12s. per square yard. Their printed washable cottons 3 feet wide at 2s. per yard, and their cotton damasks 50 inches wide with pattern alike on both sides, and their wool tapestry 2 yards wide, all made in various good tones of colouring, are artistic and effective in design and exceedingly moderate in cost. They make also various specimens of Kidderminster and Wilton carpets adapted for their papers, at from 6s. 6d. to 10s. 6d. per square yard.

At most of the better upholsterers, it is now possible to obtain hangings for window-curtains of different stuffs and materials, which can be put up at a cost varying from 15s. to 15*l*. 15s. a window complete. Some of the cheaper kinds of creton, jute, and cotton-waste hangings are not only artistic, but extremely moderate in cost, and you need have no difficulty in providing good curtains for any ordinary-sized window from 25s. to 60s. a set complete. Ordinary Kidderminster rugs, 2 yards long by 1 yard wide, are quite good enough for any ordinary room or staircase landings, and can be bought for 18s. each; they are good in design and colouring, and, as I know by experience, capital rugs for wear. I have mentioned

these various patterns of papers, stuff-hangings, and carpets, only with a view of showing you that you can obtain these from any good decorator or upholsterer at moderate prices, and to disabuse you of the idea that cheap things must necessarily be nasty.

It is unfortunate that there is not a little more common honesty amongst a certain class of manufacturers, and that they should lower themselves by stealing the designs of others in the same trade, or by bodily adapting, without leave and without payment, artists' designs which have been made to illustrate Christmas books, or for other purposes, in no way intended for paper decoration. As an instance of this, I believe I am correct in stating that the whole of Mr. Walter Crane's admirable illustrations of 'The Babies' Opera' have been bodily appropriated and adapted as a design for wall paper, without permission, thanks, or recognition of any kind. All this kind of treatment is not only grossly unfair, to use the mildest possible term, but is in the highest degree discouraging to artists (whose brains and skill of design and drawing are their living), who naturally hesitate to design work of any kind, if they know that it is to be stolen and mutilated for other purposes without recognition.

I take it this kind of treatment of artists' work is as

grossly dishonourable and dishonest as appropriating any other kind of goods from another man's premises, or forging his name to a cheque and obtaining payment of cash in change; and much as we may desire free trade in everything, I fancy all right-minded people would accept a more stringent law of protection and copyright, if only it might save us from these practices, alike dishonourable to the individual and to the trade.

In the dining-room of the house, everything in furniture should be as comfortable and convenient as possible, and designed for use, not show; the chairs should be broad-seated and backed, and strong, not narrow, high-backed, and spindle-legged, with knobs and irregularities to torture the back. The seats and backs stuffed and covered with strong, serviceable leather, or morocco in preference to velvet, which is liable to hold dust and to drag the laces of ladies' dresses. Good plain chairs of unpolished wainscot or American walnut are better than any highly polished surfaces, which show the least scratch, or deal chairs of solid design, painted and decorated in low colours, would answer equally well, and be cheaper.

I hardly like to suggest rush bottoms, lest I should be thought too archaic, but, believe me, that these are

as comfortable as any leather; and if made with various colours, pleasant to look at. In addition to the ordinary chairs, I would have two comfortable arm-chairs, of sufficient size to give freedom of space for carving purposes, and perhaps one or two comfortable lounge chairs, for drawing round the fire after dinner.

The table should be so made that those who are placed at the angles are not made to suffer torture and misery during the long hours of dinner, by projecting legs, which are always in the wrong place.

I can conceive nothing more suitable or better for an ordinary room than a round table 4 ft. 8 in. to 5 ft. in diameter, on one massive central support, the top made expanding, into almost any length, by some simple contrivance such as that shown in a table of the kind exhibited at Paris by a London firm, so as to form, when open, an elongated oval. Avoid all unnecessary carving or shaping in the legs; plain turning is amply sufficient, and much less costly. Nothing, to my mind, shows off flowers and silver better than an ebonised top left open in the centre, with good linen slips on the sides for dinner, easily removeable before the wine comes round.

Instead of the ordinary sideboard, with its grot-



esque spider-like legs and carved pedestals, and utterly useless mass of looking-glass back, with hideous carved scroll frame and top, I would suggest a plain but solidly handsome buffet, arranged for the reception of plate and glass, or for good pieces of china, the lower portion fitted up with a cellaret and liquor tray within a panelled cupboard front on one side, and a useful cupboard on the other, a few drawers for plate and other necessities for a dinner table: between the cluster of shelves above, a small splayed mirror might be fixed, arranged to reflect the many objects set on the buffet, and to help to brighten the room. Perhaps, for convenience of serving, the central portion might be made into a sliding hatch communicating with the small back parlour or breakfast-room, or a light lift from the basement might easily be made to run up in the lower portion; on either side might be *repoussé* copper or brass sconces for candles, so arranged as to light not only the buffet, but the end or side of the room at which it stands. Whatever portion of the work is made solid, it should be brought down close to the floor with a slight plinth, so as not to allow space for the accumulation of dirt and dust, which cannot be cleaned away without moving the furniture. The panels of the doors, when sufficiently high to be

seen, might be filled in with low carving in relief, in box or other hard wood, as a contrast to the other work, or with marquetry or Japanese lac panels, but the use of miniature carving, fretwork, or turned balusters a few inches in height, should be avoided as bad in taste and form, and expensive ; all supports for shelving above should be as light as possible, so as not to hide the objects with which they are filled ; the backs may be formed of plain deal, covered with stamped leather or some other light stuff ; the general furniture should be, as a rule, *en suite*, essentially useful and comfortable, and free from anachronisms which are offensive and objectionable.

I see no reason why pitch-pine or deal should not be much more largely used in dining-rooms for buffets and panelling. These can either be simply treated in plain lacquer colour, or can be worked out with the greatest elaboration of colour and ornamental design and figure decoration on quite plain surfaces, and I fancy that our rooms would be much more cheerful if the money expended on cuttings and turnings and costly carvings were to be devoted to good artistic panel decoration on flat surfaces, like some of the old painted furniture of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Carving is apt to get filled up

with dirt, and requires constant care and time in cleaning.

In olden days, the most distinguished artists were not ashamed to devote their talents to panel painting, and my friend Mr. Marks, and other eminent artists of our own day, have shown us how furniture can be artistically decorated. Why should we not have furniture painted with hunting or sporting scenes, stories of home life of town and country, and thus bring into the dinginess of our rooms some elements of good artistic painting, even as the Italians were accustomed to decorate their buffets, elbow chairs, and couches with beautifully depicted stories, telling of the riches and magnificence of the citizens who possessed them, and of the ability of the painters who adorned them? One good painted panel is worth ten thousand times more than all the meretricious carving with which so much of our modern furniture is filled. The furniture so decorated not only does its duty, but speaks and tells a story. Good deal panelling painted red, or some other warm colour, if free from elaborate mouldings and carvings, is almost as inexpensive as some of the gorgeous pattern flock-papers painted in several tints, with which it is considered necessary to make dull and heavy the walls of many a town

room. Above all, let the room be light and cheerful, the furniture strong, comfortable, and serviceable, and avoid everything which takes away, so to speak, from the freedom of the room. For lighting, I would suggest a central hanging-lamp, with good shade of subdued or warm tinted glass, throwing a pleasant soft light upon the table, without the heat and glare of the filthy compound which gas companies of the present day are content to give us long-suffering inhabitants. Nothing tends to make an otherwise pleasant dinner so miserable and enervating as the heat and stuffiness engendered in a brief space of time by this nineteenth-century abomination.

As regards the floor, the practice of covering the whole with carpets, good, bad, or indifferent, answers no purpose but to increase the upholsterer's bill, and to keep up a dust trap which is not got rid of until the times of the annual spring or autumn cleaning. Paint or stain and varnish the floor 2 or 3 feet all round in some good-wearing dark colour, by which two-thirds of the cost of the often useless, elaborate, and expensive carpet bordering is saved, and put the money thus saved into some good Indian or Persian carpet, which, while warm and comfortable to the feet, is grateful and pleasant, with its harmonious colouring, to the eye.

The design and colouring of most carpets have been materially improved in the last few years, but we have not quite got rid of the atrocious floral and other sprawling patterns of our fathers' time. In Kidderminster, Brussels, and Wilton carpets there are now innumerable simple designs with no distinct or staring patterns, quiet in colouring, and moderately inexpensive, and a square carpet with a simple border may be made with any of these, to cover the central portion of the room. As a general rule, carpets should be darker in tone than the general wall decoration, so as to form a good background for the furniture placed upon them. Turkey carpets are not always satisfactory, because the pattern is destroyed or broken up by the table, instead of being entirely seen, when used for its original purpose of reclining. The carpets themselves are expensive from their elaboration of make and design, and it seems waste of money to buy such coverings for dining-room floors, where the best part of the pattern is practically hidden by the dining-table.

As regards colours, bear in mind that, for all practical purposes, pure red may be said to be a perfect contrast to pure green, pure yellow to purple, and blue to orange. Many of you understand harmonious grouping of colours, but few study the causes.

A plain brass pole, or piece of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  gas piping, is ample for curtain rods. Nothing can be worse than the heavy lacquered brass or wood poles and unmeaning fringe valances, which only serve to show dirt and dust, and are execrable in taste.

The library of the house should also be as comfortable as possible, with broad easy chairs, low centre table for books and periodicals, a large pedestal desk with circular revolving top, to shut up all papers and keep them free from dust. This kind of desk I consider invaluable to any man who really uses his library as a work-room, whether it be for real literary work and study, or for the ordinary examination and arrangement of household accounts; for it is quite impossible, on an ordinary writing table, to keep papers clean or tidy, and this circular-headed desk shuts down at once papers as they lie, which then cannot be 'tidied' by the housemaid, who would seem to take a pleasure in putting away papers and notes in all kinds of out-of-the-way corners; the desk should have plenty of drawers and pigeon-holes; these latter, not as many of them are, an inch too narrow or two inches too wide for ordinary letters, but all made for the objects for which they are intended. It may seem absurd to say—think carefully of the use

to which the drawers are to be put—but how often are they practically useless or wasteful of precious room, by being made shallower or deeper than is required. The room should be surrounded with bookcases, the lower portion made to take large books, and with some part of it covered in with cupboard fronts, with shelving inside to file away periodicals and papers; the shelf which this lower projection forms will do admirably for the arrangement of ornaments, small busts, or other personal things, with which a man crowds the room he really lives in; of course, I am speaking to those who make a den or working room of their library, and not to those who fit a back room up with various tiers of shelving, on which are arranged a library of books which are seldom looked at, and where the room is only occasionally used, and that only for the purpose of a cloak room on grand occasions. Above this lower nest of cupboards and shelving should be shelving arranged for various sizes of books, part carried up all round the room, so as to be within easy reach; the top of these will be found useful for china or busts, or other objects of art, while the centre portions may be carried up to the ceiling to give greater accommodation; all these breaks will take away from the stiffness of the room, and, if properly arranged, will all assist in making

the library a room pleasant to work or play in. All this kind of work can be made of plain deal, stained and polished, and is infinitely cheaper than the elaborate moveable cases of wainscot or walnut, in which the aim of the designer seems often to make the framework as expensive as possible, whereas, in truth, the books within are really what should be thought of and cared for.

I give an example, in Plate XVII., of a simple mantel-piece with cupboards for pipes or other odds and ends, and wall shelving and cupboards, executed in deal at a very moderate cost, for the fitting up of a small library in an ordinary town house.

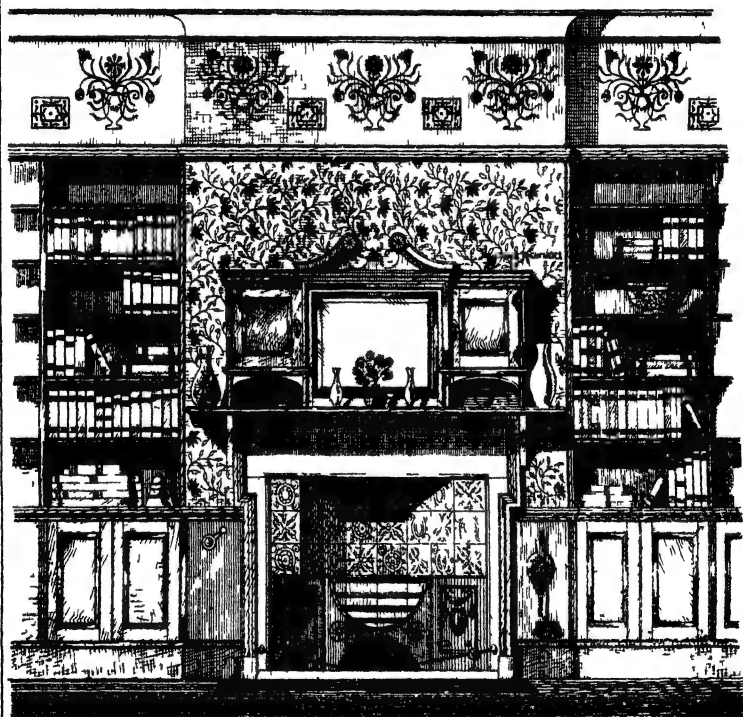
The floor should be painted or stained and varnished all over, so as to be easily cleaned and dusted, and everything that is likely to permanently hold dust should be avoided. On the floor, thus painted, a few cheap Indian or other rugs may be laid about in places where most necessary and useful.

Too much trouble cannot be taken to make the library a pleasant room to live in; it should have everything arranged and adapted for use and comfort, and not be stiff and dreary with any set arrangement. The panels of the cupboard doors may be filled in with Japanese lacquer work or painted decoration, and here



A Library Mantel Piece &

Showing arrangement of Wallspace.



ROBERT W EDIS F S A ARCHITECT



and there, in the recesses, nests of shelves may be fitted with projecting brackets, designed as part of them, for pieces of china, vases of flowers, or busts, and not looking like bats stuck on to a barn door.

I must not omit to say that in the lower portion of the bookcase should be arranged drawers—not carried down to the floor, for these are inconvenient—for use for prints and valuable photographs and sketches.

The library should be essentially home-like, with the wall space fitted up as conveniently as possible; on the top of the bookcases or nests of shelves, spring-roller blinds might be easily arranged in the cornices to draw down at night or other times, and fasten with clips to protect and preserve the books, etc., within them.

I might offer many other suggestions for the decoration and furniture of the rooms I have specially referred to. I trust those I have made will be found of some practical use, and that, above all, you will believe that my aim throughout has been to avoid all dogmatic and set rules of fashion or design, and to insist only that truth and beauty of form and colour, combined with fitness and common sense, are the main elements of all true artistic treatment in decoration and furniture of modern houses.

## LECTURE V.

THE DRAWING-ROOM AND BOUDOIR, BEDROOMS,  
NURSERIES, AND OFFICES.

THE drawing-rooms of a town house should be the rooms of all others in which good taste, both in decoration and furniture, should be everywhere apparent. The rooms wherein we practically live, talk, play, and receive our guests are essentially the ladies' rooms of the house, and should be decorated in a pleasant, cheerful manner, without stiffness or formality. The walls should be pleasant objects to look upon, not cold and dreary blanks of mere one-tinted paper, varied perhaps with birds, or bunches of flowers in gold, scattered here and there in monotonous array.

The furniture should essentially be comfortable, couches and chairs pleasant to lounge and really rest upon, not so-called artistic monstrosities, on which it is impossible to do one or the other. The rooms should, above all, look and be home-like in all their arrange-

ments, with ornaments, books, and flowers, not merely arranged for show, but for pleasant study or recreation. Here, especially, the usual good taste of the ladies of the house may find, if they will, innumerable ways of rendering their especial quarter of the house bright and cheerful, and one in which the home circle, as well as guests, may feel at once at ease and at rest.

But here I must protest against fluffy wool mats scattered about the tables, antimacassars of lace, worsted, or other work hung loosely over the backs of the chairs and sofas, velvet-covered brackets, with useless fringe fixed on with brass-headed nails, on which too often are placed trumpery bits of Dresden or other china, in the shape of dogs, cats, or birds. The wool mats and velvet-covered brackets are nothing but traps for dirt and dust, while the loose antimacassars are an endless source of untidiness and annoyance. By all means have coverings to protect the chair-backs, if you will, but let them be of some good embroidered stuff or well-designed crewel work, fixed securely to the chair or sofa-backs, so as not to be liable to be carried off as pendants to the fringe of a lady's dress, or to the buttons of a gentleman's coat.

Any scheme of decoration, therefore, which shall consist merely of so-called artistic papers, arranged in

two or more heights, in the present indiscriminate fashion, without reference to the proportion of the rooms, high or low, long or square, or of stiff spider-legged furniture, of would-be quaintness in make or shape, covered with creton or stuff, more or less to match the paper; anything, indeed, that shall give a cold, comfortless, not-to-be-touched appearance, a sort of culminating finish of so-called high art decoration, is as much a mistake as the dreary lifeless formality, of the gilt and ginger-bread type, of imitation French work, so long affected.

The art work in the room should assist, not take away from, its home-like feeling. We want a room we can live in, delight in, and be really at home in; not a museum in which we may walk about and admire, but must not touch, in which everything seems got up in the highest art fashion, which you are to look at and say, 'How pretty! how lovely!' but which, somehow or other, will probably lead many common-sense people to go away dissatisfied, and think that if this kind of frozen art is the real artistic bread we are to partake of, there is but little real satisfaction in it. Surely all this kind of stilted decoration is giving a stone when people are asking for bread.

A drawing-room should not only contain works of

art, and books for pleasant study, but should also be a room in which you need not fear to move or joke, or have that always pleasant hour before dinner with the younger members of the house. If the room be bright and cheerful, with art work of all kinds about, these little ones will be imperceptibly undergoing a pleasant mental training, while they will not be made to feel that art is a thing of which they are to be afraid, or by which their pleasant young feelings and joy of life are to be frozen and subdued. Do not make children believe that they must not move or play in a room, because they will disturb or damage the art furniture, ornaments, or set arrangement, or they will learn to detest so-called high art, as intensely as I fear many of them do going to church, from the injudiciousness of some parents forcing upon them, in early life, an overdose of it.

The one unfortunate thing to my mind nowadays is the everlasting seeking after some novelty in papers, curtains, or other hangings. We seem never satisfied unless we can make our rooms different from those of our neighbours. Decoration is being done as a fashion, not from any real love of it. Of course, we should not like to see room after room repeating itself in decoration, but I see no reason why a few really

good papers should not be the ground-work of real artistic decoration—when the narrowness of worldly circumstances prevents the more elaborate and more expensive artistic hand decoration in paint or distemper—and let the rest follow from the design of the artist ; then we might hope for real art work, instead of the cold formality and everlasting interchange of two or three colours. As a critical writer on art decoration has said, ‘ If the papers on our walls, and the curtains we hang in our rooms, were, even at second hand, but the record of the fresh impressions and the graceful fancies of artists of our own day, instead of being encumbered with mechanical pattern work, struggling to be artistic, it would be better than all the present miserable striving after novelty.’ Mr. William Morris, artist and poet, has, to my mind, realised this in many of his designs for wall papers and hangings. Not to have what your neighbour possesses is the bane of decorative art ; if we could give some one the monopoly of some half-dozen or a dozen really good papers, plain and good chairs and tables, we should be at peace ; ‘ the refinement of luxury would make frugality once more possible.’

Without in any way seeking to object to or despise real individuality or originality in art decoration, I



must protest against the craving after eccentricity and so-called novelty which is called 'originality,' and the striving after quaintness, bad in taste and effect, which is called 'individuality.' The individuality of the true artist will show itself in many ways through the house, in the tone and treatment of the colouring and furniture of the various rooms, in all of which there will be grace and beauty, and harmony of general effect and contrast ; and in the general arrangement of the furniture, whether eclectic or of some distinct style and design, and in the happy grouping of ornament, which, while seemingly careless, shall yet be studied and effective ; so that, although there be perhaps a distinct difference from other houses, marking the artistic individuality of the owner, there will be no stagey and striking effects, no glaring colours, or fantastic forms to tire and offend the eye. I venture to think that any room or house decorated after some set form, so that it be stamped as the work of this or that fashionable decorator, is utterly a mistake ; an example of that fashion which throughout I have sought to deprecate, and of a set style which is based on fashion only, and which, in a few short years, will have to give place to some other style.

The aim of all true artists should be so to design

and decorate the buildings of to-day that they may be looked upon as equally beautiful, equally artistic, and equally appropriate a hundred years hence ; and that as we to-day look with pleasure and admiration on the work done two thousand years ago in Pompeii, so may we have decoration in our day and generation which, in future times, shall be looked upon with equal pleasure and delight. I can conceive nothing more opposed to all true decorative taste than to have one room Pompeiian, a second mediæval, and a third Queen Anne, or modern Jacobean, while, to complete the anachronisms of the house, a fourth should be gilt and carved to imitate a Chinese joss-house or an Indian temple ; if the general effect be not vulgar and trashy, it will be suggestive of no real thought or feeling, but rather of that poverty of invention and artistic design which finds shelter under the adaptation bodily of other men's work.

The true artist should have an ideal of his own, of simple refinement and graceful completeness, which will save him or her from the temptation of extravagance. As a rule, it is the mere decorator who makes art decoration costly and extravagant ; he or she cannot see that simplicity of colour and treatment are better than all the heavy work of set patterns,

all the colours of the rainbow, or all the gold they can use.

In the drawing-room a dado is not, as a rule, desirable, but this will of course depend on the character and design of the furniture and proportion of the room. Cabinets, book-cases, and general furniture of unequal size and height are better framed against the general colour of the walls than cut in two by a dividing dado, or chair rail. I would retain a broad frieze under the cornice at the top of the room, and decorate it, if possible, with good figure decoration, either in oil or distemper. Anyway, try to have some pleasant lines of colour in the upper frieze, with distemper and stencil ornament, of good form, or, if you have nothing better, get some of the exquisite Japanese drawings of birds and flowers, and frame them in panels, but, above all, avoid stiff conventional decoration, which, however well done, is always lifeless and unsatisfactory, and tires and palls upon the eye in a very short time. Under this frieze may be a broad gilt or painted moulding, with picture rods of light painted or gilt iron, as I have before suggested. Below, the walls should be covered with some good decorative paper, a paper which will look bright and cheerful with or without pictures; such an one is

Messrs. Morris's 'pomegranate' pattern ; but there are very many others of equally good design, and there need be no difficulty, therefore, in selecting such a covering at no greater cost than the French papers with which it has been thought necessary to cover our walls so long. The stamped French papers, although quiet in tone, are generally cold and lifeless in colouring and design. Avoid stiff and staring patterns, raised patterns, and all patterns where lilies primroses, and other flowers are frozen into conventional forms, and have an unnatural and lifeless look.

As regards the colour of the woodwork in a drawing-room, this must depend much upon the paper or general tone of wall colouring selected. Such a paper as that I have named, having in itself such a power of colour, looks well framed in with black ; if black is used, it should be finished in what is technically called half, or bastard flat ; for, as a rule, any varnish or glaze would make the black too pronounced ; if gold is used, it should be in masses, and not in thin lines ; the panels, therefore, should be entirely gilt, and can hereafter be decorated with flowers, painted slightly in their natural colours on the gold ground.

In the illustration which forms the frontispiece of this book, 'a drawing-room corner,' I give a sketch of my

own drawing-room, showing what can be done in the drawing-room of an ordinary London house. The general tone of the woodwork is black, painted in what is technically called 'bastard flat,' the panels of the doors and shutters being covered with gold leaf as a ground for painted decoration of flowers or birds. The general wall surface is covered with Morris's pomegranate pattern paper of bluish grey ground, with exceedingly good decorative effect in colour of fruit and flowers. This paper has been on the walls for over ten years, and is as good to-day as it was when first put on. The wall space is divided about 3 feet 6 inches below the cornice, with a plain flat gilt moulding, under which is a simple  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch gas pipe, also gilt, as a picture rod. Above this the wall space or frieze has been lined all round with canvas pasted on to the plaster, and on this Mr. Marks has painted a decorative frieze, consisting of figures, birds and foliage representing no particular subjects, but all harmonising well with the general tone of the walls, and brightening up the whole room with good drawing and pleasant naturalistic colouring, all treated decoratively in bands of colour with figures, birds and foliage breaking up the general lines. The cabinet shown is of mahogany ebonised, free from all mouldings and carving, and

designed especially for china and books, with drawers for photographs and prints, the panels filled in with painted heads, representing the four seasons. The floor surface is painted dark brown, and the centre space covered with an Indian carpet, the ceiling being slightly toned in colour.

For a drawing-room in a large house, where, to a certain extent, it is required only for great entertainments—the ladies' sitting-room and general friendly reception-room being provided for in some smaller room in the house—a rich and effective treatment of the wall would be with a low panelled dado of dark black, with a delicate inlaying of ivory-toned ornament, the doors and general woodwork being painted to match, the general wall surface painted bright warm-coloured golden yellow, and powdered all over with a flower pattern or diaper of a darker tone of golden brown, the frieze being coloured in a delicate vellum or ivory tone, with arabesque or figure decoration in black, the cornice treated with delicate shades of brown and green, and the ceiling slightly tinted to match the frieze.

I saw lately a drawing-room of a newly built so-called Queen Anne house, in which the whole of the lower portion of the walls was covered with a good

golden yellow pattern paper, the woodwork painted a vellum or cream-coloured white and varnished, and the frieze formed in decorative plaster-work in very slight relief, like Adam's work; the ceiling formed after similar designs, and all slightly tinted like Wedgwood ware. The general appearance was bright and cheerful, and the low tone of colour throughout formed an excellent contrast to the Persian rugs, marquetry furniture, blue and white china, and other decorative objects in the room; there was a bright home-like look, pleasant to see, and yet it was eminently an artistic room, in which money had in no way been lavishly or carelessly expended.

I give a few other examples for the general treatment of the colouring and decoration of drawing-rooms which have been carried out by my friend Mr. Crace, and which suggest themselves as generally good in treatment:—

1. Drawing-room, about 28 ft. by 18 ft., and 14 ft. high.—Adam's ceiling, in low relief, tinted in 'Wedgwood' colouring; the cornice relieved in somewhat stronger tones; the walls hung with 'brocade' paper of pale Indian blue, divided by pilasters of 'Adam's' arabesques, painted in quiet tones of brown, warm greens, and russets, with carved medallions in each.

Dado and woodwork of quiet cream tint, with line ornaments in drab and gold.

2. Drawing-room, 30 ft. by 18 ft., and 13 ft. 6 in. high.—The plain ceiling was divided into three, and ornamented with plaster enrichment in low relief, very lightly tinted, and slightly relieved by gilding, cornice picked out to harmonise with the walls. The walls hung with crimson ground ‘brocade’ paper, with a pattern in very dull white and gold; the dado and woodwork black and gold, with margins of rich maroon, next the gilt mouldings of the panels.

3. A boudoir, 16 ft. square, and nearly as high.—Plain ceiling, decorated in arabesques of quiet colours. Walls divided by an architrave moulding, or picture rail, so as to reduce their extreme height; the upper 3 ft. 6 in. painted with ornament on light ground; the lower portion hung with silk damask of quiet tone of pale blue; dado and woodwork light, with gold lines and fine stencil decoration; curtains light, with a little blue introduced.

4. Small drawing-room or boudoir, 12 ft. high.—Flat ceiling, panelled out with a painting about 8 ft. by 4 ft. in centre, with low relief ornament outside this. The whole room panelled 9 ft. high, with pale wainscot oak; the space above this hung with embossed



leather paper, with pattern in gold, and colours of a light dull green tone. Curtains, silk and wool tapestry. Floor, oak, rather darker than walls, with Oriental carpets. Furniture, dark mahogany; the coverings varied to some extent. A few water-colours hung on the oak panelling; chimney-piece carried up in light oak, with arrangement for bronzes, statuettes in side niches, and spaces for china.

5. Boudoir.—Ceiling divided with set panels by ribs of cedar colour. Centre octagon, with radiating foliage on gold ground; eight circular panels containing paintings of children, alternately two and one, representing the months, the other panels delicately bordered with stencilling. Cornice cedar colour and gold. Walls hung with a mixed silk material of small pattern; mixed gold and greenish blue. Dado of cedar about 4 ft. 6 in. high, with narrow shelf for small china, &c. Stonework of window and recesses decorated with bramble foliage in russet green on the stone ground. Floor, oak parquet, with Indian carpet. Chimney-piece carried up and coved into ceiling; dark walnut and gold, with some embroidery on velvet panels. Cabinets to match.

In the treatment of the drawing-rooms much must naturally depend upon the light and aspect, the special

uses to which the rooms are intended to be put, and any special objects which may be intended to become features in their ultimate finish. The same tones of colour which might be selected as a ground for old pictures would rarely be equally favourable for water-colour drawings. In some rooms the repose of quiet tones is demanded, in others light and cheerful colouring is desirable; and whereas, in ordinary town houses, any decoration which favours the lodgment of dust is to be avoided, this condition need not be so strictly enforced in the country; hence, in the country, away from dirt and smoke, wall hangings, whether of silk, tapestry, or other stuff, may often be used, and give an air of comfort and completeness which cannot be obtained with mere paperhangings, beyond which there is a play of light and colour in a woven fabric, hanging to the wall, very different from the absolute flatness of tone resulting from paint, or paper-hanging pasted to the surface. This fact has led some manufacturers, both in this country and in France, to seek to produce the appearance and effect of woven fabrics by various methods of relieving or embossing the surfaces of their papers. Very ingenious and clever are some of these productions, and the reproductions of ancient brocades, cut velvets, etc., by M. Balin, of Paris, are

excellent examples of what enterprise and skilful handicraft can do. It is, perhaps, unfair to exclude from consideration, on the mere score of their being imitations, papers like these, which are distinctly decorative and agreeable.

In the case of the paper imitations or reproductions of the ancient embossed leathers, they must not be considered as mere imitations, because the result on the surface is, or may be made, the same in one as in the other ; for it is quite as legitimate to emboss and gild or ornament the surface of thick paper, as that of leather or any other material.

These embossed leather papers, with their rich tones, the slight play of light from the low relief surfaces, and with their hard varnished surfaces, afford an excellent wall covering, at a cost varying from one third to one sixth the price of the leather. They are, perhaps, most suitable for libraries, dining-rooms, or smoking-rooms, but they may occasionally be used in drawing-room decoration with good effect.

Of course, with money, you can do anything ; but I hold you may also make your rooms quite as beautiful, quite as pleasant, and quite as artistic and refined, and perhaps a good deal more home-like, with limited means, and at small cost. This present

age of luxury is, if anything, rather a curse than a help to true art feeling, so much is done for show and effect, and so little from the real love of the beauty and grace of real art. We do not want museums, we want homes. There are innumerable ways of making your walls beautiful with stamped leather, damask, and silk, and tones of gold and silver, ivory and ebony. Dark blue and gold, dark red and white, grey and red, chocolate and gold, all look well when harmoniously arranged.

At South Kensington Museum, in the refreshment rooms, there are many suggestions for interchange of colour, but all carried out utterly regardless of cost, and the walls are much too overladen and crowded with detail.

Another decorative treatment of a small drawing or music-room would be by panelling the lower portion of the walls with a deal dado, delicately painted in yellowish pink or blue, and covering the general wall surface with a golden-toned paper, arranged in panels to suit the proportion of the room, with painted and stencil arabesque patterns on the dividing spaces; the frieze treated with good figure or ornamental enrichment of canvas-plaster or papier maché in low relief, painted white, with a groundwork of reddish gold or Bartolozzi engraving tint. The floor might have a

border of light ebony and maple or boxwood parquet, with a low-toned Persian carpet in the centre, with easy lounges or divans all round the room for rest and comfort, the centre space being left clear of furniture, so as to allow of ample room for guests passing through to other rooms, or to congregate, whilst listening to song or music. Or the general tone of the wall surface may be of a bright bluish drab-coloured pattern paper, with a frieze of small yellowish diaper pattern, the woodwork throughout being painted in brighter tones of blue, with mouldings and stencil decoration on white, like Wedgwood china.

The examples of this kind of treatment which I have seen were quiet and pleasing, and looked exceedingly well, where the walls were lighted up with a few water-colour drawings, and here and there brackets with vases of deep red and blue 'splashed' Chinese porcelain. There are, of course, numerous other ways of treating the walls of a drawing-room with good taste and pleasant variety and brightness of colouring. The examples I have quoted are merely suggestive as giving a few types of colouring and contrast. In any treatment that may be adopted, let it be, above all, remembered that the walls, while bright and glowing in colour, should have no staring patterns or design,

which give at once to the educated eye a feeling of discomfort and unrest, and tend materially to destroy the harmony of the room.

The good taste and agreeable effect of the room will depend much upon the skill with which the wall surface is divided, and by the contrast and arrangement of its colouring and general belongings. 'The most harmonious proportions may easily be destroyed by an arrangement of wall paintings, while, on the other hand, the narrowest and most inconvenient spaces may often be rendered, not only pleasing, but of comfortable and domestic aspect. It is in Pompeii that we learn more especially to appreciate the magic effect of colour in the adornment of walls, which makes the rooms, almost without exception small, appear much larger and more elegant than they really are. In this character of decoration, the ornamentation becomes substantial by the opposition of colours. The contrast, in which white is placed to the darker tints, has likewise a magical effect, causing the surface of the wall to appear, as it were, broken through. The blue, in opposition to dark red, produces the illusion of aerial perspective, throwing back the actual plane of the wall, and making it appear to retire in the distance.'

All kinds of tricky, glaring conceits and eccentricities in colouring are equally wrong in house decoration as in a lady's dress. There should be, throughout, grace and beauty of design and colour, and quietness and repose of ornamentation. The decorative treatment of some of the rooms in the Prince of Wales's Pavilion, by Messrs. Gillow, and of some of the rooms in other houses in the Street of Nations, by Messrs. Jackson and Graham, Messrs. Shoolbred, Messrs. Trollope, and Messrs. Collinson and Lock, in the late Paris Exhibition, together with the design and execution of the various examples of furniture, were especially good; the boudoir of the Princess of Wales, by Messrs Gillow, and the drawing-room in Messrs. Collinson and Lock's house, being especially noticeable for delicacy of colouring and harmony of general effect. In the latter, the walls were finished in soft, delicate tones of yellow and yellowish pink, the woodwork being tinted a delicate blue colour; the mantel-piece, of good and characteristic design, being set off by tilework of red lustre ware by Mr. De Morgan; the windows hung with light curtains of Crete muslin, printed in light shades of yellow pink; the floor covered with Indian matting, and Persian rugs of exquisite design and colouring scattered over it here and there; the furni-

ture of satin and rose woods, with painted and inlaid panels, appropriate and good in design, but eclectic in character. All gave a pleasant, home-like air of comfort and suitability, combined with harmony and elegance of general effect.

In decorating a town house, you must bear in mind that dark papers and dark hangings absorb an immense amount of light, and that you can do with half the amount of candles or gas if you keep a reasonably light tone in your general decoration.

A dining-room must have gas, I suppose, but candles or lamps should be used in drawing-rooms, as softer and less damaging to all works of art. A glass candelabra of small size, so as not to obtrude itself, in the centre of the room, a few good sconces, such as that shown in Plate XIII., with light brass *repoussé* backs, or small Venetian mirrors at the back, to reflect the light, fixed here and there to the walls, will be found ample for general lighting purposes.

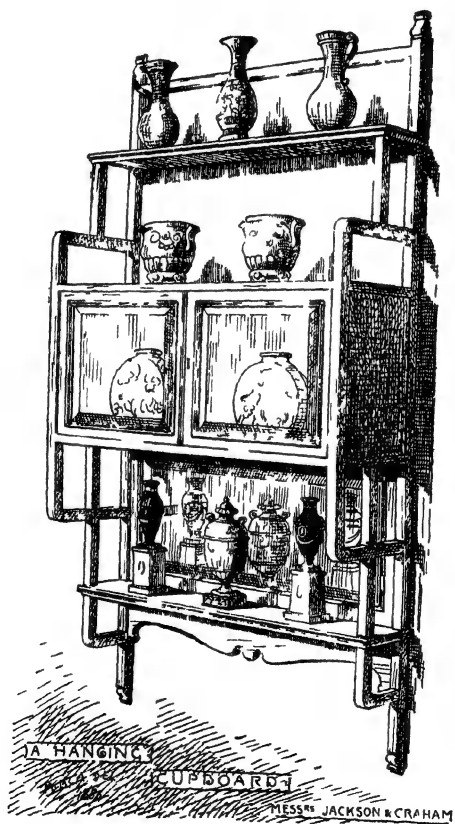
And here let me say the brass gaseliers now made after old Jacobean designs are better than all the pretentious mediæval forms that have been so long the fashion. Messrs. Powell and Sons and the Murano Glass Co. make some pretty opalesque glass sconces



and lamps, inexpensive, and generally good in design and treatment.

I shall not presume to set forth any given rules for the furniture of the drawing-room. This must naturally, in a large degree, depend upon, as indeed, practically, does every other room in the house, the good taste of the lady of the house ; a drawing-room may be purely eclectic in its arrangement, that is to say, works of almost every period of art may be here collected, provided there be a general harmony of arrangement.

Simple cabinets, filled in with panels of Chinese or Japanese lac ware, valuable inlaid or mahogany cabinets with their collections of valuable works, *bric-à-brac*, armour, jewellery, rare china, embroideries, or whatever else may be the fancy of the owner, may well find a place in the drawing-room of the house, so long as they are arranged in some sort of careless harmony of grouping and colouring ; the pleasant and judicious arrangement of these rooms, the choice of form and the assortment of colouring, so as to make up the supreme elegance of the whole put together, will make all the difference in a cheerful home-like room, which shall not only be handsome and beautiful with numerous objects of art work of every kind, but



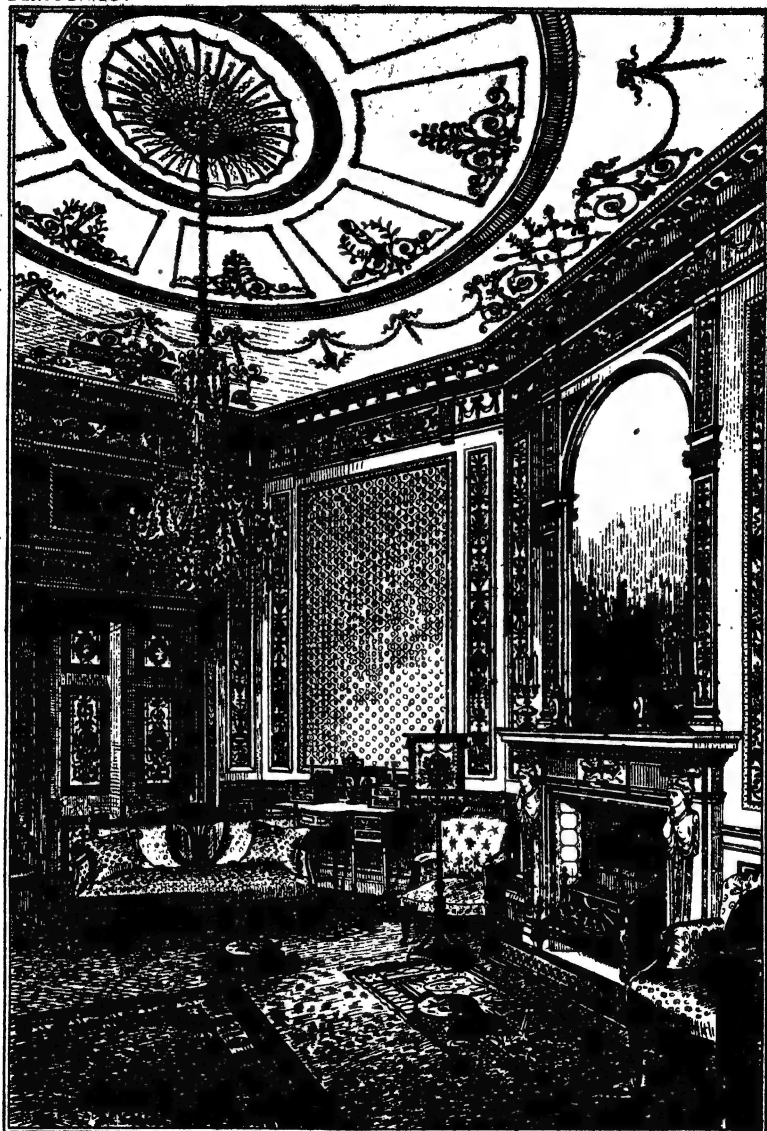
shall, above all, look as if it is arranged also for comfort and use. Small hanging cupboards with shelves for books or china, similar to the one shown in sketch, are useful and inexpensive pieces of furniture.

We do not want drawing-rooms to be filled with stiff, uncomfortable furniture, nor do we want museums in which we fear to walk or move about, but we want pleasant, cheerful rooms, in which the collection of furniture and objects of art shall all tend to make the room comfortable and habitable, not a mere show-room, from which the coverings are to be removed only on some grand occasion. The floor may be painted or covered with India matting, with good-coloured rugs scattered here and there about it, the chairs and couches should above all be comfortable and easy, and even as the thoughts and taste of the lady occupant are given to the careful arrangement of furniture, to show off to the best advantage a piece of tapestry, a laquered cabinet, to place well porcelain and bronzes Persian embroidery, or Indian brocade, so as to avoid anachronisms, so will be enhanced the cheerfulness, grace, and artistic elegance of the room; for it must be admitted that 'the anachronisms between two ill-assorted pieces of furniture may be as offensive to the eye as between the scattered parts of a complete set

of furniture, the finest pieces of armour will assume the look of old iron, according to the background which sets them off.' The present fashion of collecting works of Oriental design in china or other art work, so far assists even the uneducated, as their especial purity of taste and brilliancy of colour admit of their bearing almost every contrast. By all means have works of all kind of art surrounding you, but depend upon it your enjoyment of them will be materially increased, if they are carefully arranged and harmoniously set out.

The exquisitely beautiful satin-wood furniture of Adam's style, exhibited in the boudoir of the Princess of Wales's Pavilion at Paris by Messrs. Gillow, and shown in illustration No. XVIII., was, to my mind, an example of exceedingly delicate and graceful adaptation of eighteenth-century design to modern furniture; the panels of the various pieces formed in walnut-wood, with ebony inlaid, and laid over with box-wood, carved down, so as to show the ebony behind, in exquisite cameo-like medallions after Flaxman, the delicate enrichments and ornamentation of gilt lacquer-like character, were all elegant in design, and marvellously beautiful in workmanship.

The walls of this charming little room were



Octagon Boudoir · Adams · Style ·

Messrs Gillow \*



arranged in panels, hung with blue figured satin, divided by pilasters decorated in shades of blue and gold on maize-coloured silk, the general tone of the ceiling being ivory colour, with the background of the enrichments lightly tinted in green. The satin-wood chairs and couch were covered with figured blue satin, and the floor with a carpet of rich Persian colouring on a maroon ground.

The illustrations Nos. VII. and VIII. show examples of various good pieces of decorative furniture, made by Messrs. Jackson and Graham, which set forth some of the views I have expressed as to simplicity of form and design, and of the use of lacquer and painted decoration in panels. Let your drawing-room, therefore, be filled with beautiful objects, which need not necessarily be expensive, comfortable *causés* and divan seats, low tables for work or papers, cases for books, and cabinets for ornaments and china, but let there be no eccentricities or conceits, which are as bad in taste in furniture and decoration as they are in a lady's dress. Let everything tend to make the room bright and cheerful, home-like and artistic, with general grace and quietness of design and colouring throughout.

In most town houses of any size or pretension, the

bedrooms are in a measure sacrificed, as regards height, to the reception rooms. For the most part the best rooms, and these are on the second floor of the house, are rarely more than 10 ft. high, and sometimes considerably less, while the rooms over vary from 7 ft. 6 in. to 9 ft. in total height. At the principal floor of bedrooms, or second floor, the main or principal staircase generally ends, and a dingy back staircase commences, running up in the centre of the house, obtaining only such partial light as is glimmered down from the skylight overhead. In the bedrooms, above everything, it is necessary to have a cheerful, home-like look. Often in cases of illness we have to live in these rooms for days, perhaps weeks; we should seek, therefore, at all events to make them as pleasant and comfortable as possible. It is hardly necessary to suggest that it is most undesirable to have heavy curtains or hangings anywhere, as they only tend to make the room stuffy, to collect dust and all the thousand ills that flit innocently about in the air of a London bedroom, and which, like a flight of starlings alarmed by some sudden noise, flit away on the first touch, and help to cover everything with fluff and dust, adding materially to the unhealthiness of the room. Beyond all this, let those who at any time have been



compelled through illness to stay long in their bedrooms, tell of the misery and restlessness caused by the perpetual shaking of the fringe or valance of the curtains overhead, which with the least movement nods and chatters, like a collection of jackdaws in some ancient ruin.

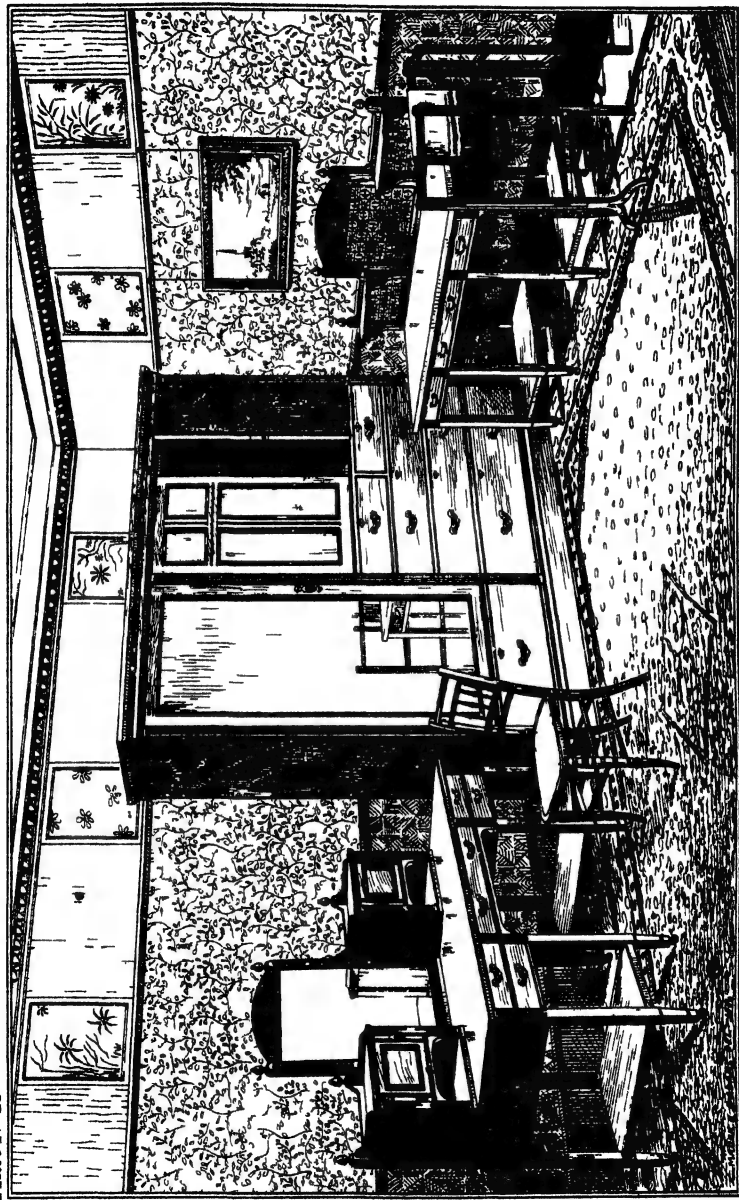
The old four-post bed is now almost a thing of the past. We have learnt that to shut ourselves up in the limited space of such monstrosities, by close hangings and closed tops or coverings, means not only excluding light, which may not be desirable, but air, which is of the highest importance ; for remember, to secure healthy and refreshing rest and sleep, it is of the highest importance that there shall be a proper and sufficient supply of pure air during the hours of sleep, so that our morning waking may not find us feverish and nauseated by the continual inhaling of impure air, and this must naturally ensue, if our only supply is limited to the space inclosed by the covering and hangings of one of these ancient four-posters.

A bedroom should be essentially clear of everything that can collect or hold dust in any form ; should be bright and cheerful, pleasantly furnished, not with the everlasting heavy mahogany wardrobes and dingy-looking chests of drawers, but with light and cheerful

furniture of good and simple design, in which everything shall be carefully arranged and studied for use, not show. The good taste of the lady inhabitants of the house will soon add to the general home feeling of rest and comfort, by innumerable knick-knacks.

I give an illustration, Plate XIX., of a simple and well designed set of bedroom furniture by Messrs. Holland, in black walnut and mahogany. The various pieces are conveniently arranged for the purposes for which they are required, without any excess of ornament or moulding. The general designs are well adapted for cheap bedroom furniture in light stained or lacquer-painted wood. The wardrobe might be fitted with a useful top cupboard, made to go right up to the ceiling, with a simple finishing moulding at the top, by which the objectionable feature of a large flat top, for the accumulation of dirt and dust, would be avoided.

I would have the whole floor of the rooms stained and varnished, or painted, and strips of carpet, matting, or rugs thrown down only where required ; these can be taken up and shaken every day without trouble, the floors washed, and the evil of fixed carpets thus avoided. If, however, a carpet must be laid down, let it on no account go under the bed or within 2 feet of





the walls ; the spaces under the bed or wall furniture would rarely be thoroughly swept, and under heavy wardrobes and chests of drawers there would be a gradual accumulation of dirt and dust, until such times as the annual general turn-out and cleansing takes place. Canopies over beds, and the old-fashioned system of hangings, must suggest themselves to all of us as being unhealthy, even if some of us think they may be comfortable. Shut closely up at night as bedrooms mostly are, we want as much free breathing space as possible, not to shut ourselves in with heavy canopies and closely drawn bed-curtains. Some of you, who may perhaps disagree with my views about canopies, will perhaps take the trouble to get up and look at the top of any such arrangement in your own rooms. I fancy you will be somewhat startled by what you will see, and will be hereafter more inclined to do without such dust-traps. If a room be carefully decorated, curtains are much better away, on the ground of health as well as of decoration. If you insist on having your room made quite dark at night, have double blinds or shutters ; a thick green tammy or tussock silk blind will effectually darken any window, and materially add to the warmth of the room.

Depend upon it, from all points of view—for the

sake of comfort, health, and cleanliness—you will find it infinitely better to do with as little carpet and drapery in town bedrooms—indeed, in any bedrooms—as possible. As regards the walls of bedrooms, even as it is undesirable to cover the whole of the floor with carpet, equally undesirable is it from all points of view—health, light, and decoration—to cover the whole walls with paper. As a matter of health, it is better to have as little material as possible that will absorb and retain the too often impure air of a bedroom ; as a matter of light, it is desirable to have a portion of the wall, at least, of some light general tone, even if the lower portion of the wall be papered in a somewhat dark shade. I have seen bedrooms, which looked cheerful and pleasant in their decoration and general appearance, where the walls to a height of about 4 feet from the floor had a dado of manilla or Indian matting stretched close to the wall, and fixed top and bottom with a small round moulding, screwed down, so as to be easily removed for cleaning behind the dado, or replacing it, when required, with new. Above this, the wall was finished with a pleasant light paper of no particular pattern, so that you could not be annoyed at night by flights of birds or symmetrical patterns of conventional primroses, daisies, or fruit, which might

in any way suggest a countless and never-ending procession along the walls. Any pattern or design which shows prominently any set pattern, or spots which suggest a sum of multiplication, or which, in the half-light of night or early morning, might be likely to fix themselves upon the tired brain, suggesting all kinds of weird forms, are especially to be avoided. The design should be of such a description that, saving as regards colour, it should offer no specially marked pattern. I have seen various designs for papers of high artistic character, but in which flights of birds or rows of conventional flowers stood out in bold relief, suggesting ideas of counting, or dreaming thoughts or restlessness, which, to an over-tired or restless brain, soon bring utter wakefulness. I see no reason, however, why the whole wall above the dado should not be tinted or coloured in distemper; and, although I do not for a moment advocate the imitation of Pompeian work in English houses, we might with advantage adopt some of its general and very effective tones of colour and design for bedroom wall and ceiling decoration. I would suggest a dark matting dado as a base, and the remainder of the wall distempered of some grateful soft tint, with graceful pattern border and frieze stencilled on, and here and there panels formed in the

decoration, with inclosing lines of bright and well-selected colours, wherein might be enframed looking-glasses with shelves under for use, and here and there water-colours or photographs, all forming part of the decoration of the room, but not standing out of it in any too prominent manner. All this kind of work can be treated simply, and at little cost, and the distemper work can be rubbed over with bread crumbs, or brushed down, and thus easily cleaned. Any such scheme of distemper colouring, not necessarily of Pompeian character, but based on some simple and harmonious style of decoration, of which there are many good examples, surely is better than all the wall papers in the world. 'Imagine,' as a writer on Pompeii says, 'what the ruins of Pompeii would have been, had the houses been lined with our fashionable wall papers. We may form some idea of the effect they would have produced by contemplating a modern dwelling, which has been deserted for a few months, with its shabby walls hung with tattered strips of tawdry hangings.' One of the prettiest rooms I remember to have seen was finished in soft tones of distemper, in which dark grey, red, and yellow were the chief colours in the decoration, and where a broad decorative frieze under the ceiling added immensely to the general effect.



The general woodwork of the doors, windows, and skirtings should be painted in some plain colour to harmonise or contrast with the wall decoration, and the whole varnished ; woodwork finished in this way can be easily washed or cleaned, and the extra expense of varnishing will be saved in a few years. The bed should be of brass or iron, the furniture of light wood, varnished or polished ; and, now that good painted tiles can be obtained at small expense, they may be used in washing-stands with good effect, or the wall above may be lined entirely with them to a height of 2 or 3 feet.

There are now so many really good designs of wall hangings of subdued and harmonious colouring, that there should be no difficulty in selecting such an one. It is well to remember that the greatest artistic skill of colouring alone can so graduate all the various colours as to confuse the eye without attracting it to any given portion of the design, and that, therefore, it is far safer to trust to some really good distemper colour ; and this should, and may well be, of such an absolutely undefined shade that you hardly know what to call it. A little thought, a little study, and a little time will be well spent in the careful furnishing and decoration of

the sleeping-rooms of our houses, so that they may be healthy, cheerful, and comfortable.

I need scarcely say that the laws of health require that there shall be ample ventilation in all the sleeping rooms of the house, or they will get stuffy and absolutely unhealthy at night, when shut up, and there is no opening and shutting of doors and windows for ingress of fresh air, and no fires for egress of foul air. Fresh air must be brought in either by the ordinary gratings and tubes through the outer wall, or from the staircase well, in which there is generally a fair supply of fresh air,—although not always of the purest kind,—by means of ventilators over the doors. All this kind of practical decoration is as necessary for bodily health as art decoration is for mental enjoyment and pleasure; and if the one be neglected, the other may almost as well be left undone.

In the dreariness of town houses, nothing has struck me as so utterly cruel as the additional dreariness which generally pervades the rooms especially devoted to children—the nurseries of the house, the rooms in which our little ones spend so large a portion of their early lives—and yet I know of no rooms which should be made more cheerful and more beautiful in their general appearance than these. I do not

mean that you are to put expensive cabinets, rare china, or even pictures on the walls. These would not be understood, and would naturally help to the discomfort of the little inhabitants, who would be told that they must not play or romp, for fear of damaging them in some way or other.

While the furniture should be strong and useful, it need not be prison-like ; the walls need not be covered with some monotonous imitation tile paper, because it wears better than another.

In the windows of the day nursery there should be boxes of flowers, in which buttercups and daisies, primroses and daffodils, might be cultivated, to teach the little ones of the country, and of the nursery rhymes and fairy tales they love so well. A few shillings will buy bulbs or seeds enough to make a constant variety from springtide to winter, and an endless source of pleasure for little hands to tend and weave into fairy chains and tresses ; and little eyes will brighten in watching for the outburst of some new flower. Let the walls be papered with some pleasant paper, in which the colours shall be bright and cheerful, distemper the upper portion of the room for health's sake, and varnish the paper if you please. But nowadays, when really good illustrations are generally,

and not as an exception, to be found in so many of our monthly and weekly publications, why not, instead of destroying them, cut them out, or, better still, let the little ones do so, and paper them over the whole of the lower portion of the walls? A band of colour might be made by buying some of the Christmas books,—which Mr. H. S. Marks, R.A., Miss Kate Greenaway, and Mr. Walter Crane have so charmingly and artistically illustrated,—and by pasting the scenes in regular order and procession, as a kind of frieze under the upper band of distemper, varnished over to protect from dirt. The variously depicted scenes from the stories of Jack and the Bean Stalk, Cinderella and her sisters, of the numerous beautiful princesses and enchanted princes, and a host of other nursery rhymes and tales, may thus be used, while here and there, as varnished panels, might be pasted up the large Christmas coloured illustrations, which few Christmas numbers are now without. Why not cover the walls of the nurseries with illustrations, telling of the glories and, if you please, the horrors of war—teaching peace and goodwill by illustrating the antitype—of the various birds, beasts, and reptiles that went into the ark, of flowers, and all other things which are bright and beautiful? All these would make the children's room

a bright and cheery spot, and in pleasant guise teach them many things, better than all the lesson books in the world.

There are some charming papers designed by Mr. Walter Crane, illustrating some of the best-known nursery tales and rhymes, which are admirably adapted for the walls of day nurseries, and are cheap enough to be frequently changed. Do not have curtains of any sort in your nurseries; they only hold disease and dust. The more cheerful and gay your nurseries are, believe me, the brighter and happier will your children be. In the night nursery the walls should be all discoloured, so as to be cleaned or re-done at small cost at frequent intervals; for I am quite certain that here, above all things, it is essential to wash out, as often as possible, the peculiar bedroom atmosphere which must cling, in a measure, to the generally low rooms of the upper floor of a town house; a simple dark shade of colour will offer no spots or nightmare effects to drive away sleep or disturb the little ones in their times of feverish unrest or illness. But in the rooms they live in, there is no reason why the 'writing on the wall' should not be the earliest teaching of all that is beautiful in nature, art, or science; and by the illustrations of fairy lore, incline the thoughts of our little

ones to all that is graceful and beautiful in imaginative faculties. The knowledge thus gained, amid the smoke and dinginess of most of our large inland cities and towns, will tend to make the annual change to the country or seaside ten times more enjoyable, ten times more instructive.

The floors of the rooms should be stained and varnished or painted all over, and a small centre carpet pinned down in the day nursery, so as to be easily taken up and cleaned ; small strips of carpet or India matting laid down beside the beds will be amply sufficient in the night nursery. Let the beds be of iron, and the furniture strong and useful : painted or stained deal will be found amply sufficient, and is at the same time light and cheerful. London nurseries are, unfortunately, very low, and unless the back and front rooms communicate by large folding doors, which can be thrown open with the windows—so as to allow of a thorough current of air to sweeten the rooms, when the children are out of them—there is much difficulty in securing good and proper ventilation. Too much care cannot be taken to obtain this, and large open gratings fixed over the doors and communicating with the staircase landing, with Boyle's ventilators in the chimneys, will be found good and effective means of

obtaining a large amount of artificial ventilation. No pains should be spared to render the nurseries of the house as cheerful and pretty as possible, or to secure ample light and thorough ventilation.

To surround our little ones with decoration and every-day objects, in which there shall be grace and beauty of design and colour, instead of the commonplace and vulgar tawdriness which in so many houses is thought good enough for the nurseries, will imbue them with a love and appreciative feeling for things of beauty and harmony of form and colour; but if we wish to have healthy children, we must have healthy homes, and, in studying how best to decorate the walls, do not let us forget that it is first of all imperative that there shall be no overcrowding of the generally low rooms, and that ample light and pure air are essential to their bodily and mental health and well-being.

Those who value good servants will not forget that their rooms be made bright and cheerful, and that, if possible, in one room in the basement there shall be some pleasant corner where rest and change may be got after the daily work is done. The servants' hall or sitting-room should not be the dingy place it generally is; let it be papered with some cheerful pattern paper of pleasant colour; let the floor be painted and

varnished, with a small centre carpet or matting, and the walls hung with some good photographs or prints, which are nowadays to be obtained at small cost ; put boxes of flowers in the windows, and let the furniture be strong and serviceable, but not prison-like.

In the generally dark underground passages of town houses it is difficult to do anything with the walls to make them clean and light, unless the whole surface is covered with white Dutch tiles ; but this of course is expensive, and cannot always be done, especially when the house is held for the usual short term on lease or agreement. The upper portion of the walls may be distempered, and the lower portion painted to a height of, say, 5 ft. from the floor, so as to be easily cleaned. The servants' bedrooms should all be distempered, and the floors painted all over. The rooms throughout should be thoroughly ventilated by some such system as that recommended for the nurseries, and every means taken to render them light, airy, and cheerful.

In the bedrooms of a London house, which, as a rule, are sacrificed in height to the reception-rooms below, it is desirable to utilise every corner and recess, without filling the rooms with heavy and inconvenient furniture. And although the wardrobes of the present



besides which they are necessarily expensive articles of furniture. I would suggest that the recesses formed by the chimney breasts should, in part at least, be filled in with good hanging closets, which can be screwed to the walls and removed at will. These may be made to go up quite to the ceiling, by which arrangement no spaces, such as those formed by tops of wardrobes, would be left to harbour and accumulate dust and dirt. The top portion may be arranged with shelves, whereon can be stowed away articles of dress not immediately required. The middle space should be fitted with hooks and rails, on which to hang dresses and other articles of a lady's belongings; the lower portion being fitted with sliding shelves and drawers, for caps and bonnets, and the whole inclosed in folding doors in two heights, the lower panels of which may be fitted with plate-glass, which is a necessary element in the room. All this work can very well be done in good sound deal, without any frittering away of detail or ornamentation—which are utterly unnecessary and out of taste—and the whole painted in some shade of colour to harmonise with the decoration of the room.

Naturally, chests of drawers are required, but these should stand up well above the floor, on strong or plainly turned legs, so as to be easily removeable, and to allow of the space under being thoroughly cleaned and dusted. The dressing-table should have nests of convenient drawers on either side of the lower portion, while inclosing cupboards may be arranged on either side of the swinging glass for gloves or jewellery. But, above all, the mere furniture of the room, whether it be of painted deal or inlaid satin-wood, should be perfectly simple in design, made for use and not for show, and free from the expensive trimmings of unnecessary carving and rows of tiny balusters, which are not only bad in taste, but must be terrible to those who, in times of sickness and suffering, are naturally led by distorted imagination to think them wearisome and countless. If the panels are to be decorated at all, let them be done with some pleasant drawings in monotone or deeper enrichment, which shall not suggest spottiness and crudeness to those who have to lie long hours and look upon them.

In the windows may be arranged plain deal boxes, fitted as ottomans, in which to stow away articles of dress, with soft and luxuriously stuffed seats and backs, that would in themselves suggest rest and quiet. I

cannot in any way agree with the fashion which is endeavouring to revive the heavy wood bedsteads of our ancestors, whether with or without the heavy posts and top superstructure. To my mind, nothing can be better or more cleanly than the painted iron or brass bedsteads, with perhaps some light hangings, cheerful, yet subdued in colour. At any good upholsterer's, it is possible to obtain a variety of patterns of printed cottons and cotton tapestries, good in design and colour, and exceedingly moderate in price. If these be too sombre to your taste, I would suggest that, instead of the more expensive hangings, you should endeavour to buy some of the printed Indian cottons, called 'sambar,' which will give you as much colouring as you please, at a moderate cost, or some of the Indian silks with cotton backs, which can, nowadays, be bought for something less than 2s. a yard.

As I have said before, avoid carpeting the whole of your room, and paint the floor all over, of some dark shade of colour, and put down mats or rugs only where required. I am quite certain that this arrangement will decrease the stuffiness, and add much to the healthiness of an ordinary town bedroom, and that every common-sense person will agree that everything that harbours dirt or dust, or tends to prevent

the thorough circulation of air during the long hours of night, when the room is necessarily shut up, will be in every sense undesirable. The blinds of a bedroom should be of some soft toned colour, and not the vivid staring white and yellow to which we are so accustomed. I need not dwell further on this portion of my subject, as the cheerfulness and comfort of a bedroom is quite as much dependent upon the graceful taste of arrangement of the ladies of the house, as upon the upholstery and fittings with which it is furnished.

There are innumerable small items of furniture which all tend to make up the general requirements of a bedroom, which with care and thought can be provided at comparatively small cost, in the way of hanging-glasses, jewel boxes, boot racks, bonnet cases, cases for medicine bottles, without lumbering up the generally small floor surface of the room, provided that they be thought of and arranged for, before any set or so-called 'suite' of bedroom furniture is bought; for a few pounds all these necessary arrangements can be provided in suitable and useful form, in place of the usually extravagant, and oftentimes comparatively useless, articles of furniture which are generally considered necessary in the bedrooms of the house: chests of

drawers should be so arranged that the lower portion may be adapted for clothes, while small flanking cupboards may be provided on each side for the hundred and one small articles which are necessary in an ordinary family household, and which all help to make up the harmonious whole of a well-furnished house. In a small room the chest of drawers may be so fitted up that it shall do duty for a dressing-table with looking-glass complete, or the recesses formed by the chimney breast may be fitted with shelves and drawers, bonnet boxes and boot racks, all combined, with hanging spaces for clothes, at a much smaller expense than that of the elaborate and heavy articles which are sold as 'wardrobes,' and which all take up too much of the wall and floor space, in the usually cramped area, of an ordinary bedroom. The mantel-pieces may be fitted up with cupboards, shelves, and glasses, so as to add materially to the artistic character, as well as the general comfort of the room; and at a small expense a plain writing shelf or table may be attached to any of these pieces of furniture, and made to fold up or slide in, when not absolutely required for use. Often a bedroom is made to do duty as a private sitting-room as well, and too much care cannot therefore be taken to design the general furniture so that it

may combine the necessary requirements for general use, as well as for the storage of clothes and linen, and so that the greatest amount of accommodation may be obtained in the smallest amount of space. Hanging book-shelves with cupboards on each side for medicine bottles are invaluable in a bedroom. I cannot too strongly advocate the desirability of all furniture being designed, in the general rooms of a town house, so that it may afford accommodation for the numerous requirements to which it has to be put, and cannot too strongly protest against the generally inconsistent and in great part useless articles, which are provided nowadays by ordinary upholsterers in the so-called 'suite' of bedroom furniture.

In my next and last lecture I shall endeavour to treat generally of the every-day articles of domestic use.

In decoration and furniture, it is above all desirable to avoid all eccentricity and seeming quaintness in design, with no particular use or object, to take care that everything in furniture shall be strong, serviceable, and fitting for its particular use, and to remember that elaboration and expense are really as unnecessary elements in the furnishing of a house as in dress and decoration.

## LECTURE VI.

## GENERAL ARTICLES OF DOMESTIC USE.

IN this, my last lecture, I propose to speak generally of the many articles of domestic use which are essential in the furnishing of a house, and which should, as far as possible, be as much examples of good taste in design, and of beauty of form and colouring, as the more important works of decoration and furniture; nor can I see any reason why every little piece of pottery, porcelain, glass, plate, bronze, iron, or other work, however humble in itself, should not be essentially artistic and pleasant in form, instead of being, as it generally is, essentially ugly and commonplace. I see no real reason why everything that is made should not be beautiful in itself, or why the general articles of domestic use in our day and generation should not be quite as beautiful, and quite as good in artistic treatment, as any of those in the best periods of ancient art.

I am quite aware that at present it would be almost

impossible to realise any such hope, as the public taste, in most matters pertaining to art, is in a transition state, and is only gradually being improved and educated by the examples of good art, which are to be found in the innumerable collections, public and private, which now exist; and thus many of us are willing to accept, almost without a protest, or indeed to prefer, grotesque forms or shapes in which mere novelty and eccentricity of form or colouring are their only recommendation.

It cannot therefore be wondered at, that manufacturers of all kinds are willing to pander to this false and vulgar taste as a mere matter of trade profit and advantage; we can only hope that as the public become more educated in art matters, and by constantly being brought into association with examples of ancient art, not only in the elaborate types of decorative art and furniture, but in the commonest objects of daily life and use, they will gradually learn to distinguish things beautiful and true, from those essentially ugly, commonplace, and false.

Until there is a demand for better taste in ordinary things, we can hardly expect that the manufacturers themselves will go out of their way to provide it, but will content themselves with pandering to the perverse



fashion of the day, and to the insane and vulgar striving after mere novelty and eccentricity of design and form. So long as people of wealth and supposed good taste are content to people their rooms with porcelain monkeys, pug dogs, cats, and birds, and other monstrosities of similar kind, we can hardly expect manufacturers to attempt to guide them into more sober and less expensive tastes. The age of luxury can hardly be one of refinement, nor can we expect to find our mere manufacturing guides and teachers setting before their customers things beautiful, simple, and artistic, when far greater profit and gain may be obtained, by pandering to the craze after novelties and the present fashion of luxury and expenditure in things, certainly gorgeous and elaborate, but withal eminently ugly and inartistic.

I saw lately in the shop window of one of the principal silversmiths in a northern town a thermometer made after the design of the Nelson monument, and a trinket box with the outline of the Burns memorial on a small scale, with toast-racks in imitation of spreading vine-branches, brooches of grouse feet mounted in gold, and various other examples of the utterly depraved taste of modern design.

There is no real reason why simplicity and grace

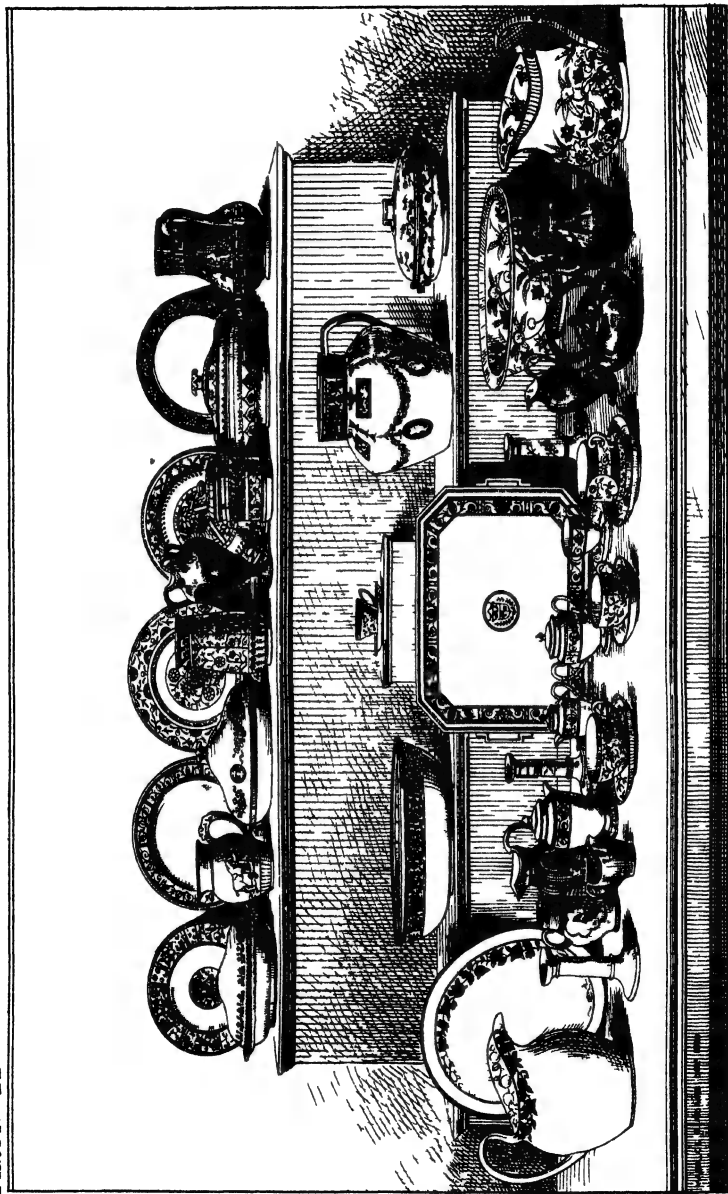
of form should be more difficult to obtain in pottery, china, glass, silver, and other objects of daily domestic use, than the extraordinary productions which are offered for sale in almost every china, glass, or other shop, except that these are more profitable to the maker, and require less thought and study at the hands of mere manufacturing designers. I was told a short time ago, by an eminent manufacturer, that he was obliged to produce for the million, and that he could not live if he did not, as other makers provide the articles of form, shape, and colour which I condemned, and that mere good designs did not pay. I could only answer that there are some few artist tradesmen who do make it pay to sell only good things, and that in the time when Messrs. Wedgwood employed Flaxman, all their designs in pottery and china were good in form and ornament, from the most elaborate vase to the humblest plate or cup. What beauty can there be in bulbous vases, supported by primroses and cowslips, the roots of which are matted together to form the feet? or in the hosts of objects in pottery, glass, or porcelain, of similar character, in which the design is contorted into all kinds of extravagant forms and shapes?

It is satisfactory to notice that many of the best

potters and glass-makers are endeavouring to teach the public to appreciate quieter and more simple taste, by introducing into their work imitations of good ancient forms, or in obtaining really good designs from artists, who are artists and not mere trade designers, and thus producing works in which graceful simplicity of treatment, beauty of outline, and artistic skill in ornament and decoration are especially noticeable. In the works of Wedgwood, aided as he was by an artist of the highest ability, Flaxman, we find examples in charming ware, delicate in tone and colouring, and of the most refined classic treatment, with infinite beauty of design, form, and workmanship; and I am glad to find that this well known firm are falling back on their old models, reproducing Flaxman designs, and, as a consequence, offering to the public not only works of great beauty and elaboration, but ordinary breakfast, dinner, tea, and toilet services, in which the old forms and shapes are preserved, all of which are infinitely more beautiful than the more modern productions. The two sketches given are examples of modern Wedgwood ware now produced by the firm, and are all reproductions of old designs and shapes, the small 'diced' pattern vase in black Jasper ware







being from a design by Flaxman, the other vases and plaque being made from the old moulds, and decorated with good figure painting by T. Allen. I give an illustration, Plate XXII., of several of the pieces of pottery and china now made by this firm, for domestic use, all good in form, design, and colouring, and withal moderate in cost, and can only express a hope that they will be content to continue to produce only such things as are good in form and design, and thus to maintain the high position and rank among potters to which they long since attained. One of the toilet services, the 'peony pattern,' shown in the illustration, is an absolute reproduction of the old ware, in form, colour, and design. The general shapes of all the examples shown in the illustration are purely true potter's shapes, and not those which suggest that they should be executed in cast-iron, *repoussé* brass, or chased silver or gold, in fact, anything but clay; they exemplify, moreover, what I have been throughout advocating, that good things may be cheap things, especially noticeable in the specimens of breakfast and dinner services, and bedroom ewers and basins, which are generally good in shape, decoration, design, and colouring, and all to be obtained at prices quite as reasonable as those paid for similar articles, but of

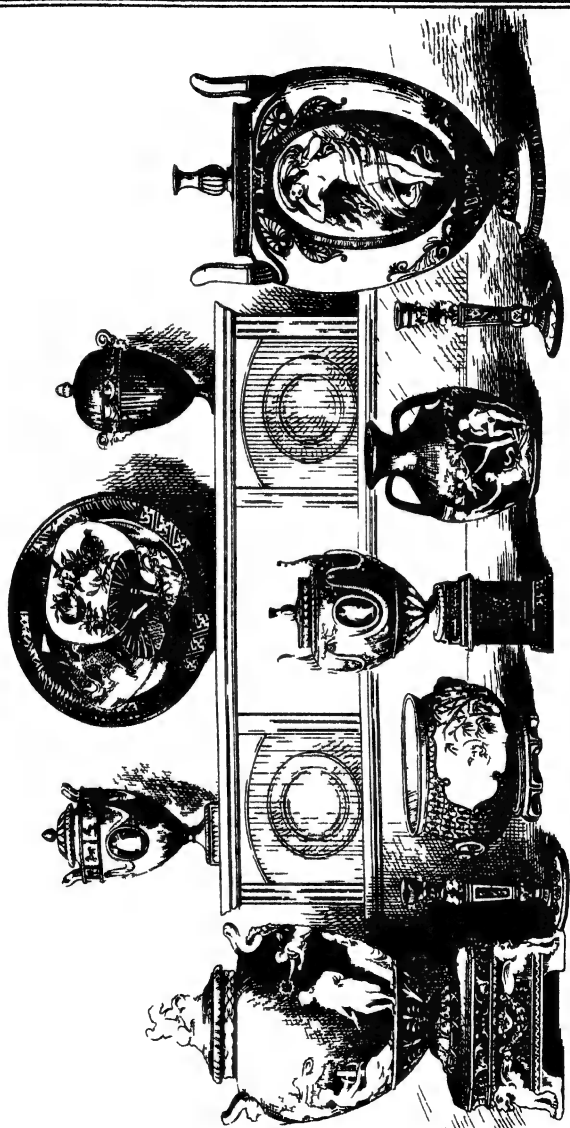
commonplace and vulgar design, which are produced *ad nauseam* by any third or fourth-rate potter.

The copy of the Portland vase, shown in Plate XXI., and the *plaques* of pale blue and white, and black and white jasper ware, from Flaxman's moulds, show the general excellence of handicraft in the work of this firm. The 'Pegasus' vase in black and white jasper ware, shown in the same Plate, is also a copy of an old Flaxman design, of great beauty of form and modelling, only two of the original vases being extant.

Messrs. Minton, Messrs. Minton, Campbell, and Co., Messrs. Doulton and Co., the Royal Worcester Porcelain Manufactory, Messrs. Webb, Messrs. Powell and Sons, and other English manufacturers, have, respectively, in their specimens of pottery, porcelain and glass, spared no pains to improve the design and manufacture of their various wares, all of which show an immense progress in skill of manipulation and good artistic treatment.

From the earliest times, the work of the potter has, in a great degree, marked the progress of civilisation and art knowledge in all nations. The very plastic nature of the material, which, under the potter's skilful hand, was moulded into various shapes and forms, offered, perhaps, an incentive to artistic imagi-





MAURICE BARON DEL. 1850



nation, not only in the lines and shape of the mere material clay, but in the decoration with which it was ultimately adorned.

The history of the art is of the highest interest, as offering not only an insight into the various skilled work of the manipulation and mixing of the clay, but also as giving important proof of its early use and antiquity.

In the tombs of Thebes, dating about 2,000 years B.C., have been discovered drawings, showing the potter at work kneading, balling, and throwing the clay, and it is a curious fact that, until quite recently, this latter part of the work of the potter has been almost identical through some thousands of years, except that in this century the motive power of machinery has been brought into use instead of hand labour.

To a certain extent, too, the same system of decoration—varying, of course, materially in treatment and skill of drawing and colouring, as the intelligence of the world progressed—has been carried out.

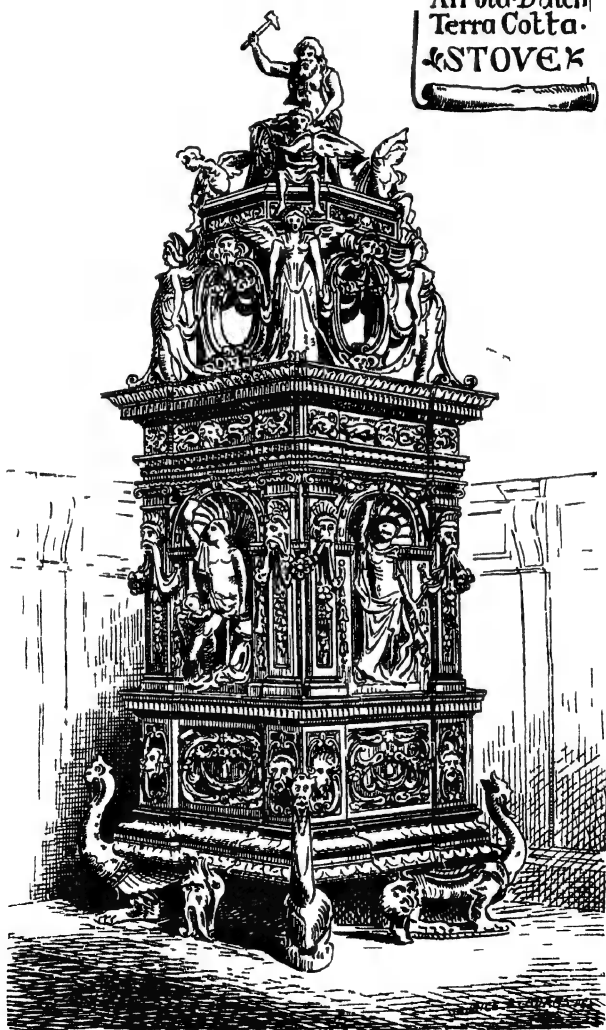
Throughout all ages the potter's art has taken high rank in the manufactures of nations, and many distinguished poets, historians, and philosophers have been handed down as eminent in the art, while, from the days of Phidias to those of Flaxman, eminent

sculptors have been associated with the potter in the making of models and designs. In the various national museums throughout the world are preserved many exquisite specimens of pottery, in which the interest of the historic and mythological stories worked in their decoration is combined with grace and beauty of form.

What can be more artistic or beautiful than the old Dutch terra-cotta stove shown in the illustration, and why cannot modern potters give us stoves of equally good artistic character, but simpler in design, for heating large halls, studios, or picture galleries?

From the tombs of Etruria and Pompeii, from the burial-places of ancient Britons, many interesting specimens have been gathered, all telling of the early use of pottery. In early mediæval times, many architectural monuments were adorned with specimens of the potter's art, and the works of Luca della Robbia, sculptor, goldsmith, and potter, are amongst those which are most valued. In Italy, the lustre ware of Gubbio, Urbino, and Faenza—which Mr. de Morgan is so successfully endeavouring to imitate—the delft ware of Holland, the exquisite *faïence* of Persia,—in the Azulejos of the Alhambra, and the so-called Rhodian ware,—and the marvellous examples of *faïence* and porcelain of China and Japan; and, in later times, the

An old Dutch  
Terra Cotta  
STOVE



works of Sèvres, and the best of our own English potters, have all been equally sought for and prized as gems of artistic production. While we are glad to pay large prices to secure examples of any of these artistic productions for our cabinets, or for the decoration of our rooms, we might surely insist that the things we use daily on our tables, or the commoner ornaments or vases which we place on our mantelpieces for use and show, should be, in some slight degree, a reflex of those ancient examples which we prize so much, not only for their intrinsic value, but for their artistic beauty. Without copying their individual peculiarities, we might learn from their general exquisite form, and design of ornament and decoration, some lessons for the treatment of similar articles in our own day and generation, so that we might eventually be able to produce, not only articles of luxury, but the commonest objects of every-day use, beautiful in form, good in colouring, and graceful in design and decoration.

Many of the best firms are, I am glad to say, turning their attention to these common objects, and are producing every day breakfast, dinner, tea, and toilet services, combining excellence of form and workmanship with delicacy of colouring and moderation of cost.

In the commoner objects, however, there is yet much to be desired ; a dish or bowl, good in shape, is often utterly ruined by some vulgar piece of ornamentation, or handle of coarse and ugly form and shape, or by crude enamel colouring, which chips and breaks off with the least knock.

It is questionable whether the taste which produced many really beautiful examples of pottery, *faïence*, and porcelain, contributed by some of the leading English firms to the late Paris Exhibition, and illustrating, to a great extent, mere attempts at copying or imitating Oriental and European designs and colours, is right in principle ; quite certain it is, however, that English artists can never imitate that delicacy of drawing and *finesse* of design and decoration so peculiar to Oriental art, in which, by a few dots and seemingly careless touches, infinite beauty of effect is produced. The Oriental artists never painted two flowers alike, but varied their designs with infinite grace and beauty of everchanging ornament, whereas the English and European artists, if they do attempt irregularity at all, show a manifest method in it, as utterly unlike the real thing as modern blue and white is to the old work of the same kind.

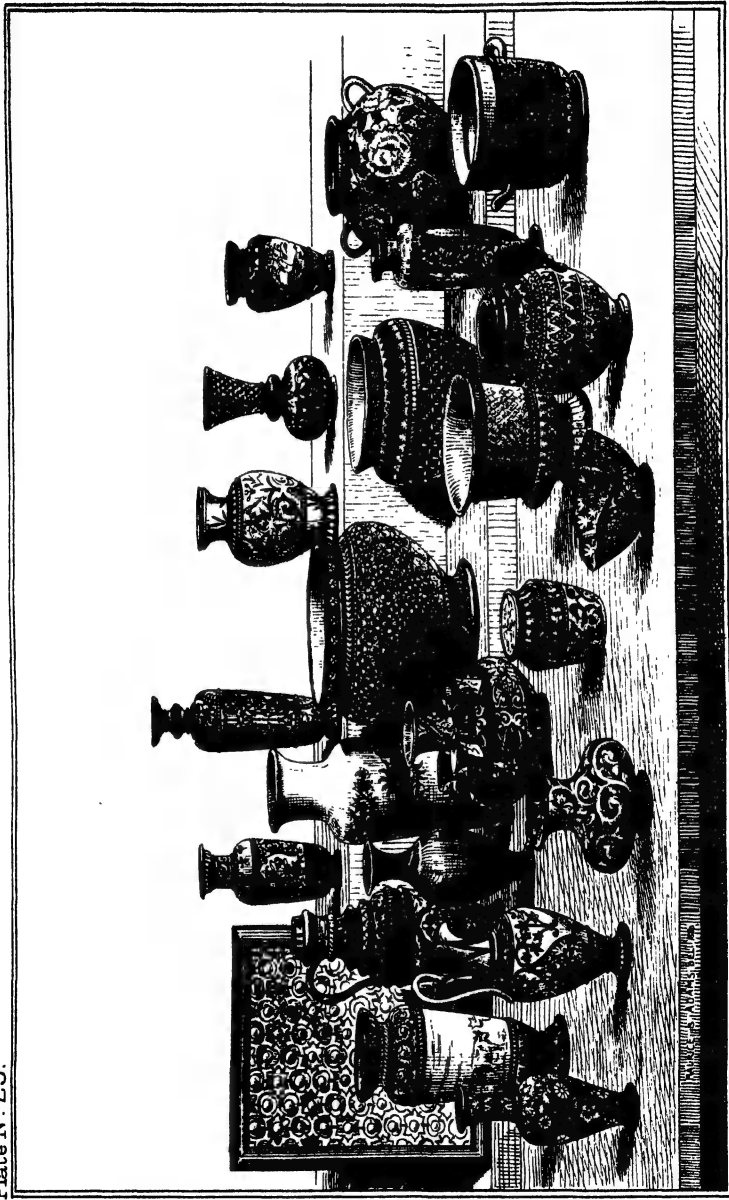
Messrs. Doulton & Co., of Lambeth, have of late

years laid themselves out, with great success, to produce terra-cotta work and pottery of good artistic character for architectural ornamentation. In the stone ware, known as 'Doulton' or 'Lambeth ware,' they have been eminently successful in producing work not only good in form, but very beautiful in decoration, design, and glazing; thanks chiefly to their having secured the services of skilful artists and designers,—foremost amongst whom are Mr. George Tinworth, whilom pupil and student at the Lambeth School of Art, and Miss Barlow,—whose designs and ornamentations of the various works executed under them, by Messrs. Doulton, are especially good in modelling, design, and decorative treatment.

This ware is practically the treatment of pure pottery clay, in the same manner as the system known as *pâté-sur-pâté* in porcelain, the art of painting with clay upon clay, by which great beauty and artistic character of decoration is obtained. The especial characteristics are perhaps the beauty and depth of the glaze, which are entirely obtained by the decomposition of salt in intense heat. The various tints required are painted on the clay before firing, and the uncertainty of the firing and glazing prevents any two pieces being alike; the manufacturers themselves hardly knowing







what will be the result of the firing, and only arriving at a general idea by the known effects produced.

I give two illustrations, Plates XXIII. and XXIV., of various articles *de luxe* and for domestic use, made by this firm to illustrate this portion of my lecture, and I cannot speak too highly of the improvement shown therein, in form, outline, and decoration.

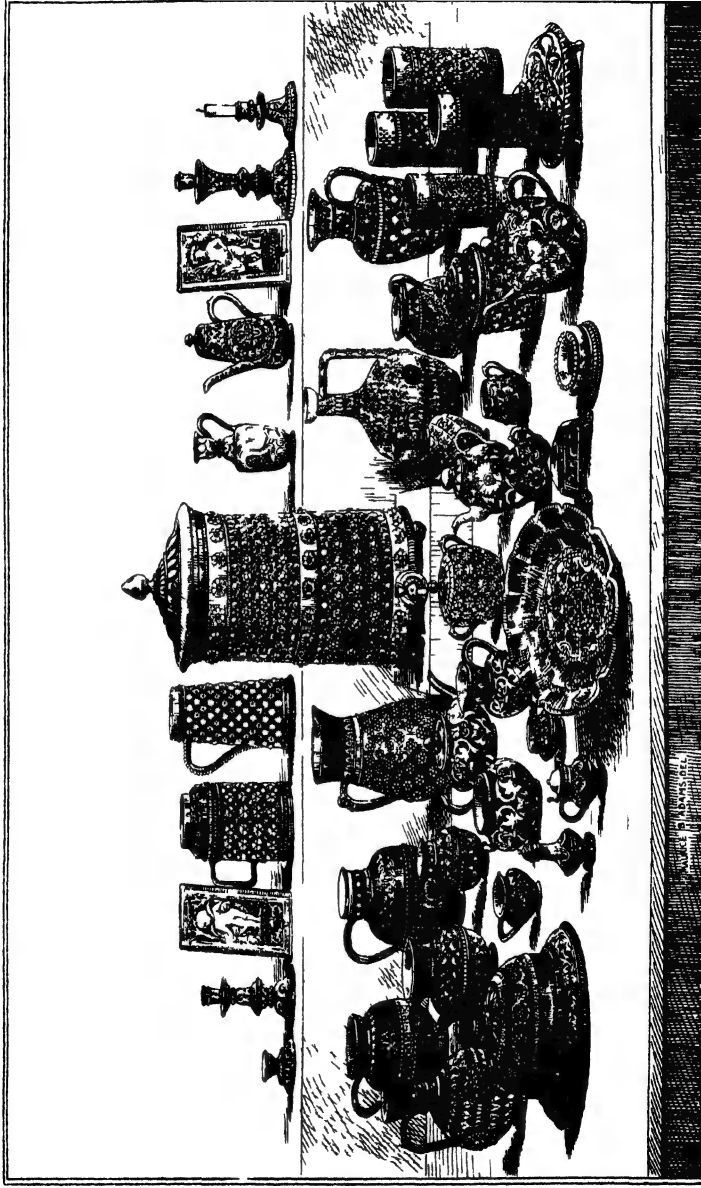
By these it will be seen that the commonest articles of domestic use, filters, beer-jugs, tobacco-jars, butter-coolers, teapots, salad-bowls, and the smaller pieces, such as salt-cellars, pepper-boxes, and common candlesticks, are all treated artistically, with good forms and ornamentation, and generally in a practical and common-sense manner for every-day use.

In the present day, painted tiles are largely used, not only for wall decoration, but in the design of very many articles of furniture. All this kind of work may well be taken up by women, anxious, if possible, by some honourable means to gain a livelihood in the world, provided they will give a fair and proper study to the theory and practice of the art, and not look too lightly on the study and application necessary to produce any really good work, by doing which they will assuredly fail in producing any satisfactory result.

By a careful study of natural objects, or even mere

skill of adaptation of good designs, much may be done by any lady who has fair taste and skill in drawing, and the knowledge of colouring necessary to produce really good decorative work on china. With a little thoughtful labour and care, women may paint decorative tiles for any ordinary purposes, and may, if they are content to labour diligently to produce good drawing and harmony of colour and design, make it a work of profit as well as of pleasure. In every garden there are innumerable flowers, which can be arranged naturally or conventionally for tile or china decoration; these should be drawn in outline, and slightly tinted in one or two colours, so as to be easy of production, for it is well to remember that the million will gladly buy simply painted tiles, or china ware, for decorative purposes or use, if well drawn and good in design; where the few can only afford to purchase, at any remunerative price, the more elaborate pieces of painted *faïence* and porcelain, which are the result of long years of labour and infinite knowledge, gained by much patience and innumerable failures.

There is no reason why this kind of work should not be taken up by numbers of women, who are anxiously seeking to find some remunerative use for their artistic talents; too often, however, they are not



Domestic Pottery in Lambeth Ware.

J. W. & C. DOULTON & CO.



content to follow out the simpler work, but aim at producing elaborate paintings, often more or less adapted from inferior copies, and thus, as a rule, invariably fail from insufficient knowledge or want of power in drawing and design. This is more especially noticeable in figure work, which requires years of close study and drawing from nature, before any real excellence can be obtained. Some of the exquisite paintings of *pâte-sur-pâte* on china by M. Solon, for Messrs. Minton, Campbell, and Co., are especially beautiful in drawing and general treatment of design.

The aim of all true art should be to produce good work for the million, and thus gradually to oust out all that is bad and ugly, by bringing into common everyday use things beautiful and artistic in colouring and design. It is easy to produce elaborate and costly works for the few collectors who may care to purchase them, but it is infinitely more satisfactory to make good work, which shall be within the reach of all classes of the community. I was indebted to my friend Miss Spiers, who is an artist in every sense of the word, for some excellent examples of artistic design and colouring in painted plates and dishes, which, through her kindness and courtesy, I was enabled to exhibit, as illustrating this portion of my

lecture, and to Messrs. Minton for some excellent examples of cheap hand-painted and printed tiles, suitable for the lining of fire-places, ordinary panels, wash-hand-stands, and other every-day purposes, many of which can be bought from 1s. to 2s. 6d. each.

Dr. George Birdwood, in a lecture lately given in the Rooms of the Society of Arts, very aptly drew attention to the causes which, to a large extent, were enfeebling and corrupting the artistic character of Indian pottery, and many of his remarks may justly be applied to all other pottery and porcelain of the present day, insisting as they did on beauty of form, delicacy of surface, and gracefulness and proper subordination of ornament in all articles of domestic use.

In the examples of pottery, *faïence*, and porcelain of all countries of all dates, up to the last two centuries, as a rule, we find beauty of outline, comeliness of form and decoration, and harmony and moderation of ornamentation and colouring, not only in the more elaborate objects, but in the smallest and most unimportant pieces of domestic ware. Why, therefore, cannot we have nowadays all things more or less beautiful and truthful in design and treatment? If only the manufacturers and their designers would seek to copy the simplicity of ancient forms, rather than to strive



after the production of grotesque novelties in shape and colouring, then might we hope that everything in daily use should be more or less true in taste, correct in drawing, and beautiful in form.

It is hardly necessary to assert that grace and beauty in design need be no more expensive than ugliness and eccentricity, and that education in artistic matters, combined with a study of all that is graceful and beautiful in the best periods of art, can alone help us to that refinement and innate truth and elegance of design which should guide us in the humblest as in the most elaborate productions of pottery, *faïence*, and porcelain in the present day.

In these days much anxiety is rightly shown for providing work of brain, eye, and hand, in which the tenderness of touch and true feeling of taste of the lady portion of the community may be utilised for the general good of humanity, and as a means of livelihood to themselves. In painting on china and artistic embroidery there are, I contend, ample opportunities—at once legitimate and useful—for their skill and taste, which may be used to the advantage of the public and to the profit of themselves.

In the present fashion for art-needlework, there is excellent opportunity offered for ladies to take up work

which is especially their own, and which, rightly carried out, lends itself essentially to good decoration in the various hangings and coverings so necessary in all houses; but here again there seems to be something wrong, either in the training of those who learn their art at some fashionable school of needlework, or in the taste of those who make the designs, for the work which is offered to the public is not always artistic, and too often is filled with too much elaboration of detail and ornament, involving infinite labour and infinite expense.

I have had recently worked for me, by a lady who has devoted some portion of her time, for various reasons, in part to art-needlework, some excellent curtain borders, in crewel-work, in which the arrangement of natural flowers into a sort of conventional pattern,—necessary for the treatment of a narrow curtain border,—was carried out in a highly artistic and satisfactory manner. But then the worker was practically an artist, who, instead of copying bad examples, out of a book, of some stereotyped pattern of decoration, went into the garden or the field, and copied in one case sunflowers, sunflower buds, and leaves; in another, flowering rush and corn flowers; in a third, *Tritoma uvaria grandiflora*, or what is commonly

called 'poker plant,' and arranged the design practically as she worked, so that no one yard of bordering was exactly like another; but the whole was harmoniously and gracefully treated, and the brilliant colouring and true artistic rendering in the work, thus rightly treated, assisted much in the general effect of the room; the cost, exclusive of materials, was a guinea a yard, a marvellously reasonable price for real art work, which, with care, may last for generations and be always beautiful. But it is useless repeating in crewel or *appliqué* embroidery, Japanese designs or elaborate arabesques not adapted in any way for such work. There are innumerable ways in which this really artistic embroidery can be made eminently decorative, and eminently useful for all kinds of coverings, hangings, and for dress, and I should gladly see it more largely used, but the proper rendering of embroidery and *appliqué* work is as much a matter of artistic training as painting, or any other work of the kind; and we are apt to be disgusted with the many poverty-stricken attempts of young lady amateurs, who offer us, for natural effects, the stiffness and ugliness of conventional forms, on chair coverings, dresses, and antimacassars, and to hesitate before suggesting work of the kind, for fear that it should be not only

extravagant in price, but unsatisfactory and unartistic in design and treatment. With good taste and artistic skill, embroidery of all kinds may be largely used to beautify and enliven our rooms.

We are told that the holy robes of Aaron were bordered by pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet, intermingled with bells of pure gold, and in every museum in the world, and in many an old house, there still remain examples of ancient embroidery, eminently beautiful, the work of many a noble lady, and many a devout *religieuse*; but with everything else in the seventeenth century, embroidery became debased in taste and workmanship. Now that it is being so largely taken up again, it is well to remember that to be good, the design, drawing, and work must be the work of one head and one pair of hands, and for true artistic rendering Mr. Ruskin's precept, 'that the first condition of an ideal work of art is that it should be conceived and carried out by one person,' is more or less essential.

We pride ourselves, nowadays, on the general purity and excellence of our English glass, and yet how often do we see the most beautiful forms utterly ruined by inartistic engraving and cutting, or coarse and crude colouring! It is not necessary to describe

the many uses to which glass, in all ages, has been applied, whether in the mosaics of Pompeii or the elaborate Roman glass engraving, such as the marvellous gem-like work of the Portland vase—of which an exceedingly good copy has been made by Messrs. Wedgwood, and is shown in one of the illustrations of the work of this firm—or in the elaborate designs and skilful workmanship of the Byzantine enamelled and gilded glass, or in the exquisite examples of Venetian filagree work, in which great elegance of form and infinite variety of colouring were combined with the highest skill in handicraft and design.

In the numerous modern examples of Venetian glass there is much that is graceful and beautiful in design and treatment, but, unfortunately, the influence of bad designs, and a craving after so-called novelty of treatment, is doing much to damage otherwise beautiful work, and modern requirements and false taste are falling foul of ancient traditions, and in glass as in china we are seeing imitations of work essentially suggestive of other materials, and utterly subversive of true artistic treatment.

In purity of material and skill in production, glass-makers can, to a great extent, hold their own with the workmen of any period of the art, but, unfortunately,

with their skill of handicraft there is a manifest deterioration of design and artistic treatment, which would seem to arise from absurd attempts to produce in glass, objects and forms utterly inconsistent with the true use and rendering of the material, and quite inconsistent with its real use and purpose. In glass, as in pottery, queer and grotesque forms, coarseness and bad elaboration of ornament and detail, are taking the place of graceful charm and beauty of form, which the peculiar delicacy of the material would seem to suggest in its proper treatment.

By all means let us reproduce old Venetian forms, and put into the modern glass all the delicacy of colouring and shape peculiar to the best works of ancient examples, but in the interest of art, of common sense, and practical use, let us avoid all extravagant forms, which are not only bad in art but costly in make. Table glass should be as pure and as simple as possible, delicate in shape and ornamentation, inexpensive and fitting.

It may be a triumph of mechanical skill to produce a throne or a buffet in solid glass, but surely utterly inconsistent with the real use of the material; and while it is legitimate to employ the highest talent, in producing such elaborate and eminently artistic

designs of engraving, cutting, and modelling shown in the examples by Messrs. Webb in the late Paris Exhibition, surely it is utterly out of keeping with the real purpose of the material, which is at once brittle and risky to move without extreme care, to employ it for furniture stands and other works of the kind. In table glass it is essential to have elegance in form combined with purity of decorative treatment, and we may well be thankful for the revival of the art of the old Venetian glass-workers, which is giving to us for every-day use table glass, ornamental and useful, chandeliers, sconces, and a host of similiar objects of great excellence in design, great beauty of form, and moderation of cost.

Far be it from me to advocate in any way the more extensive use of foreign-made glass to the detriment of our own English ware, but I cannot help feeling that a dining-table looks infinitely more cheerful and more artistic when covered with water bottles, flower vases, and glasses of variety of colour and form, than with the cold monotony of ordinary English glass, no matter how pure its crystal or how elaborate its cutting. The present fashion for colour and variety, in glass as well as in everything else, is inducing English manufacturers to turn their attention to similar

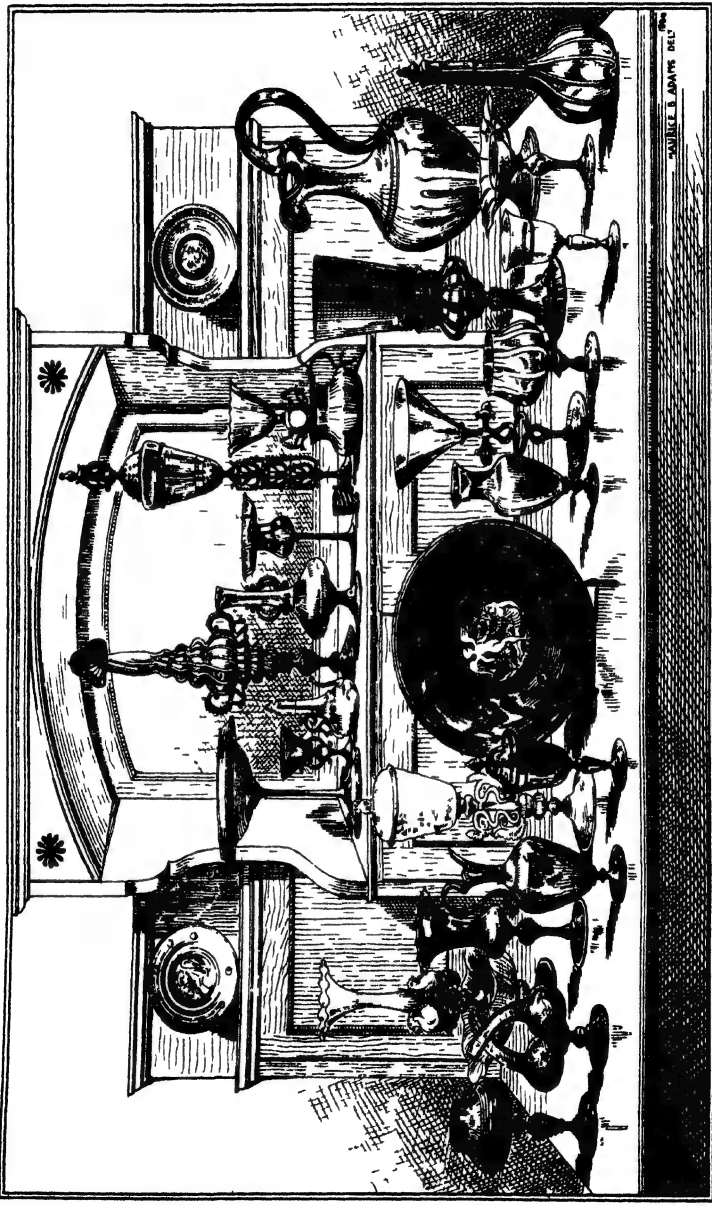
work, and Messrs. Powell and Sons, of Whitefriars, and other manufacturers, have produced many exceedingly beautiful specimens of artistic glass for domestic purposes at very moderate cost. But to the humble glass-blowers of Murano,—whose forefathers, for six centuries, largely contributed to the prosperity of Venice, spreading the glory of its name to all parts of the world,—must be conceded the prize for innate beauty of form, colour, and ornamentation, and for infinite variety of all kinds of table glass, in which most of the old forms, still remaining in the local museum at Murano, have been copied, or adapted for modern requirements, and in which there is, for the most part, the same good artistic treatment and purity of form ; and, what is infinitely more to the purpose in these very practical days, it can be bought at a price which bears favourable comparison with any glass in this country especially made for domestic purposes.

The modern Venetian glass made by the Murano Glass Co., examples of which are shown in the illustrations Nos. XXV. and XXVI., are all more or less adapted from ancient examples, are good in design, suitable for general domestic use, and exceedingly moderate in cost, some of the pieces being sold for a few shillings, the ordinary wine glasses costing about





Plate N° 25.



Modern VENETIAN GLASS.

W. A. A. H.

1871

The Venice & Murano Glass & Mosaic Company.

18s. a dozen, and the decanters and water bottles from about 25s. the pair.

The more elaborate examples of articles *de luxe* have been copied from old pieces from various collections in this country and abroad, and are especially beautiful in workmanship and colouring.

In English glass we see great variety of forms, many exceedingly graceful and good, great excellence of cutting and engraving, and occasionally some fairly good specimens of coloured and gilt glass, but we look in vain for anything which may compare with the exceeding elegance and high artistic character of the old Roman or Venetian glass. Quite recently, attempts have been made by the Murano Glass Co., with some success, to revive the old Roman practice of placing a thin film of gold between two layers of glass, and to overlay one colour with another; and, by cutting, to produce a cameo-like effect in the ornamentation. But we have yet much to learn before we can, in any way, notwithstanding all our supposed greater knowledge and higher education of the working classes, attain to that perfection of skill and beauty of form and ornamentation which are so noticeable in all the old glass. There is no need why our glass should be made heavy with red lead,

for the purposes of giving increased brilliancy to it when cut ; we can have the same lightness of material as in the olden glass, and ought to be able to produce the most elaborate designs and the simplest forms for every-day use equally well, equally beautiful, equally artistic, and at reasonable cost.

In the last Paris Exhibition, Messrs. Powell and Sons, Messrs. Webb, and other English manufacturers, exhibited collections of glass of high excellence, showing marked progress and improvement in design and workmanship. But what we want nowadays is that our English manufacturers should give us good general forms for table use, sconces, and candelabra for ordinary rooms, of common-sense and artistic design, and vases, bowls, and dishes for ornament and use, of really good form and ornamentation, at a price that shall be within the reach of all.

In the lower sitting-rooms of most town houses it is necessary to have some sort of lower screen or blind, to render the rooms fairly private from the gaze of too curious passers-by. For this purpose all kinds of contrivances have been carried out, from the old wire-gauze blind, with its general dirty and dingy look, and everlasting painted ornament of Greek fret or honeysuckle border, to the curious twisted cane in-

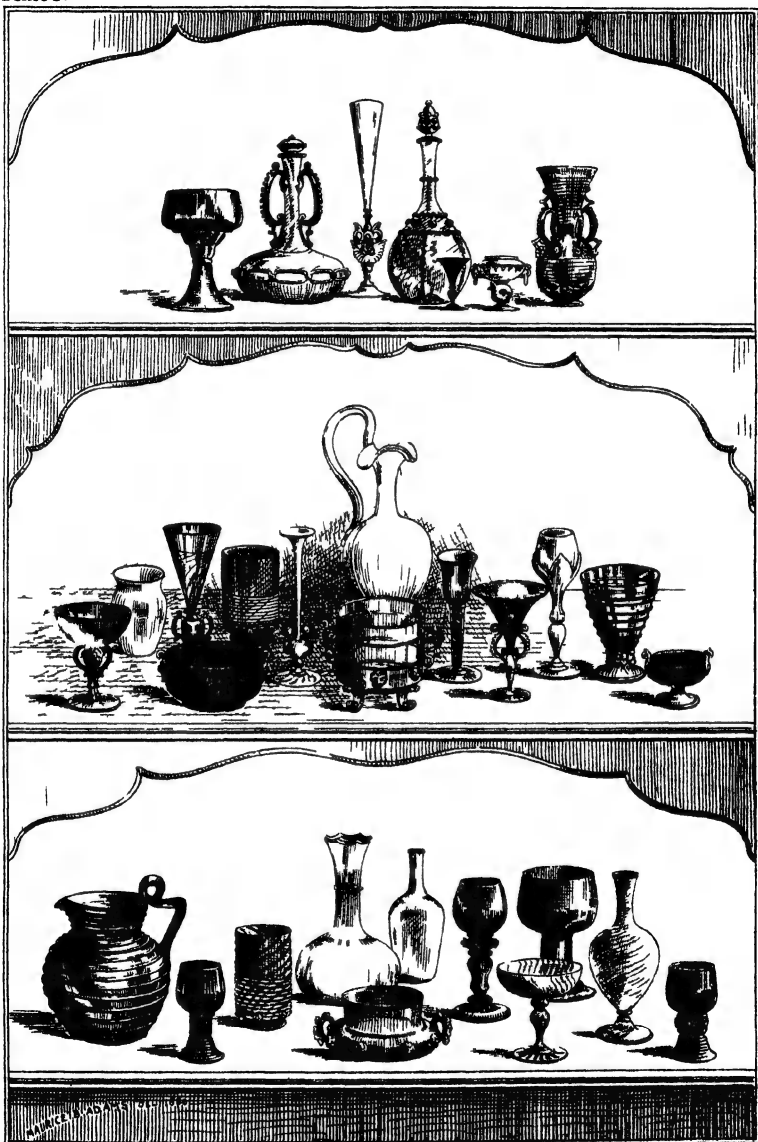


Table Glass

THE VENICE AND MURANO GLASS AND MOSAIC COMPANY



ventions, which are bad in design, and infinitely too spotty and strong in colour to be pleasant accessories in any room, in which artistic decoration of any kind is thought of. Instead, therefore, of these coarse and unsatisfactory arrangements, I suggest that either a pattern of good diaper, or good ornament, be done on the lower portion of the window-glass, by the ordinary means of embossing, or that a second sheet of glass containing the pattern—which may be done in slight tints—be fixed on the inside face ; or, better still, have blinds of what is called jewelled glass in square quarry lights, or good figure or flower decoration in leaded glass, either done in outline, and stained in delicate tones of yellow, or worked out in good stained glass of various colours ; these can be made to any height, and fixed inside the sash so as to be easily removed for cleaning purposes. All this kind of work can be done at the cost of a few shillings a foot superficial, and will add materially to the charm of the room. Blinds fixed to the sashes in this way may be objected to, on the ground that the sash weights will have to be altered to carry the extra weight of the blind, and that when the lower sash is opened the use of the blind is practically done away with ; but the first objection may be got over at the price of a few shillings per window, and if flower-

boxes are fixed on the sills outside, made of ordinary zinc, with blue and white tiles inserted in the front, at a cost of from 20s. to 30s. each box, not only will the latter objection be done away with, but the bright and cheery look of low shrubs in winter, and many-coloured and sweet-scented flowers in summer, will add materially to the pleasantness of the room.

I am quite aware that I am offering no new suggestions in these remarks on blinds and flower-boxes. I am simply advocating their much greater use. For, beyond the pleasure to yourselves in the pleasant outlook upon bright flowers, the colour of the tiles and flowers would be grateful spots of life and colour in the dreary monotony of our town streets. All this kind of arrangement will be found much better than the ordinary frame blinds, which are fixed with bolts to the sash-beads, and are troublesome to take down and often in the way, especially when flower-boxes are set outside as I have suggested.

In all kinds of silver, electro-plate, bronze, brass, and ironwork in the present day, there is generally an utter want of taste, in form, artistic design, and general treatment. We have been inundated with specimens of almost every description of metal of the worst possible taste, and often of cheap and inferior work-

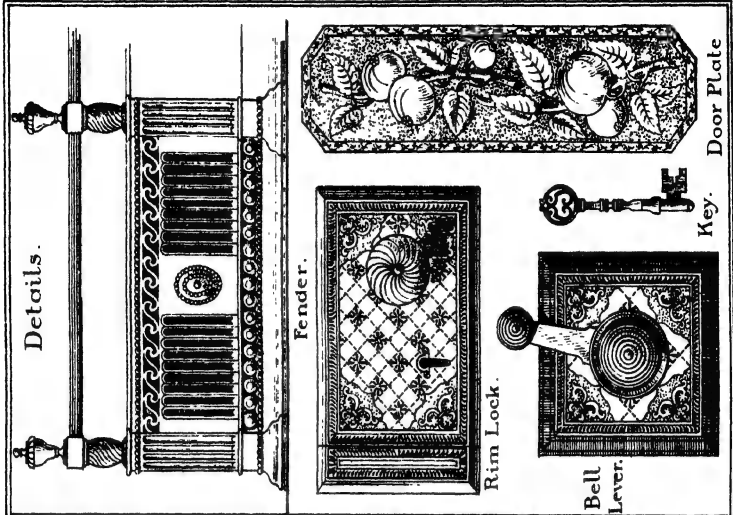
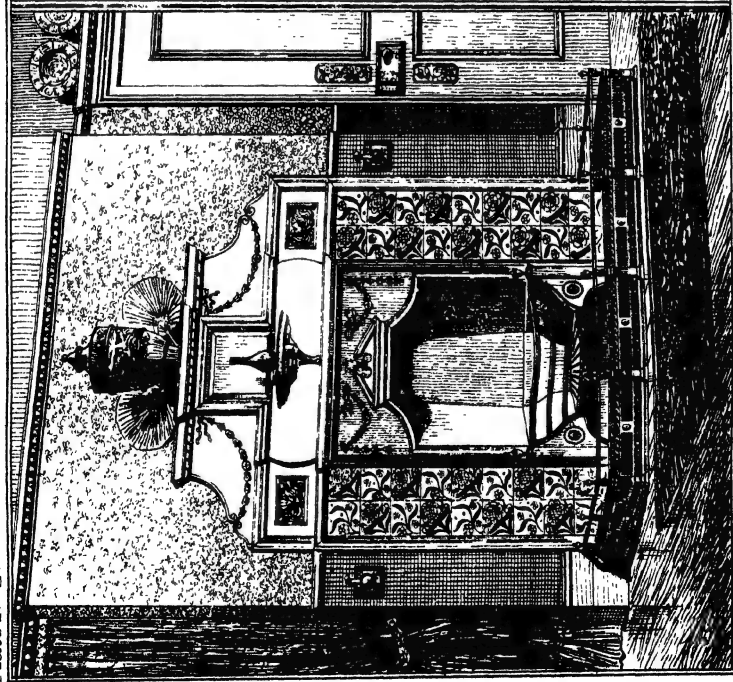


manship, for which we are largely indebted to the manufacturers of Birmingham, whose goods, at once bad in taste and cheap and trumpery in execution, have obtained the justly opprobrious title of 'Brummagem,' signifying, I take it, all that is nasty, cheap, and inferior ; mind, I do not include in this sweeping condemnation the works of Messrs. Elkington and other manufacturers of similar standing, who have done their best to produce metal work of great artistic merit and great perfection in manufacture ; but it is miserable to see on our tables the trashy cruet-stands of filthy form and ornamentation, and the hundred and one articles in the shape of *épergnes*, cups, vases, tea and coffee services, candlesticks, and ornaments of all kinds, utterly devoid of all good artistic character, commonplace in design, and eminently trashy in execution and make ; or to see in our rooms the commonest and most flimsy arrangements in the shape of door handles and cast brass bell-pulls, which are always coming off or breaking, to our personal discomfort and continued expense in replacing.

As specimens of good artistic iron and brass work, adapted for general domestic purposes, I submit an illustration, Plate XXVII., showing examples of stoves and general ironmongery made by Mr. Thomas Elsley,

of Great Portland Street, which I have selected for the purpose of showing that, even in the smallest fittings of a house, good design and good art may be obtained for almost the same cost as the inferior and generally ugly and commonplace fittings which are nowadays so largely used. Some of the articles illustrated are necessarily expensive from the elaboration and manual labour involved in their making, but the *repoussé* brass or copper finger plate shown in the illustration at 10s., or the engraved brass bell-pull at 25s., cannot be called expensive, when it is understood that the make and workmanship are as good as they can be, in addition to their artistic merit. The grate shown can be bought in plain iron for about 3*l.* complete, which is no more than the cost of the commonest kind of register stove, with its hideously designed ornament and burnished steel mouldings.

There is no absolute reason why most of these articles of domestic use should not be made good in form and shape, honest and strong in construction, and at the same cost as that now paid for them, except perhaps that the manufacturer will not take the trouble to procure two or three really good designs, or to copy some of the exquisitely beautiful forms of ancient examples, and work only upon these models for



Domestic Brads Work :

MADE BY THOMAS ELSLEY :



general cheap things ; perhaps, even if he were willing to do this, he might well answer that the public would not continue to buy of him, and would demand in his work, as in that of most other trades, continual novelty and continual change at the lowest possible cost.

I cannot help believing that both arguments are wrong ; a vast proportion of the public are able to appreciate good forms when they see them, and many of them are willing to pay high prices for old silver of artistic design and shape, and would, I am satisfied, prefer to have, as far as possible, all these small necessities of daily use equally good in shape and ornamentation, and to pay a fair price for the better article, rather than have the same things bad in form and altogether unartistic, provided always that, having regard to better quality and sounder construction, they could get them on equal terms as regards price. Unfortunately, as a rule, this is not to be done, for the manufacturer naturally answers that things artistic in character demand much higher skill of handicraft, more careful execution, and therefore higher cost of production, and that he cannot, therefore, produce them without adding to the price charged for the ordinary commonplace productions of similar character, or else materially lessening his profit on the transac-

tion, and this we, a nation of shopkeepers, can hardly expect him to do.

I combat this by saying that the higher education of all workmen and the constant opportunities given to them of seeing and studying good work of all kinds, should, if they have any real heart in their work, imbue them with the same kind of artistic feeling as was evidently in the hearts and heads of the old workers, and that it should be as difficult—with real love and regard for their work and knowledge of true form—for them to produce ugly things as it would seem nowadays for them to produce beautiful ones.

I am quite aware that all this kind of argument may sound Utopian, and that I may fairly be told that in ancient days the workmen were surrounded with refinement and art work of the highest type in great things as well as in small, and that they worked practically under totally different conditions to what they have to do in the present day ; but, on the other hand, in olden days the workmen took infinite delight in the work that they did, it was a source of pleasure and of emulation ; high art and industrial art with them were synonymous terms, and whether we look at the marvellous examples of gold and silver filagree and chasing, *repoussé* copper work, modelled bronzes, and

plate of all descriptions still left us of the ancient Greek and Roman periods, or at those of the early mediæval times under the Gothic kings, or at those of the later days of the Italian Renaissance, we notice throughout infinite beauty of form, delicacy of work, and the highest skill of handicraft, and it must be borne in mind that all these treasures, which from time to time have been brought to light, were, as a rule, nothing more than common objects of household and domestic use.

I contend that there was in the workmen of past days, an innate feeling for beauty, a skill of eye and hand, and an education of mind in the rendering of everything that they set their hands to, which, alas! is utterly wanting in the great majority of ordinary workmen of the present day. We pride ourselves on a higher state of civilisation, a greater freedom of life, and surround all classes of the community with protecting laws and a high educational system. We have before us thousands of the most beautiful examples of the best periods of art work of all kinds; this age of steam and luxury is constantly bringing before us the best works of all the countries of the world, and offering encouragement in every possible manner for the production of high artistic objects for every-day use,

and with what result? With all our advantages, all our opportunities, all our wealth, and all our education, we are living, to a great extent, in the absolute lowest depths of ignorance in most matters of art, so far as beauty of form and power of design or even of adaptation are concerned, in the commonest objects of daily life.

It is quite true that in these last few years there has been great progress made in many trades cognate to art, in the so-called industrial arts of the country, but it is at present but a feeble glimmering of that far-off light of love and truth for art's sake, which I hope may some time shine forth as strong in all works of handicraft and artistic skill of the present day, as it did in the centuries that are past.

To my mind, the influence of trades-unionism is asserting itself in a large degree to the detriment of English work, and to keeping up extravagant prices for ordinary articles of domestic use; it is simply absurd that all the various kinds of so-called art work, whether in decoration, furniture, or other work, should be paid for at a set price, no matter what difference there may be in the skill and quickness of the workman employed, and that work should be paid for to all men in like proportion, whether well or



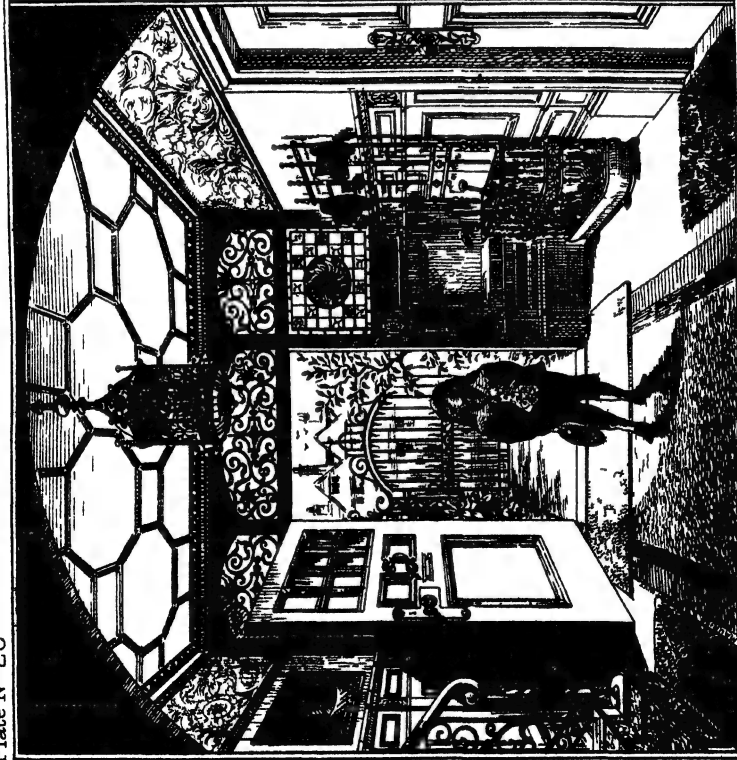
badly done. We have only to look at the various art work imported into England to see that it holds its own with, and often surpasses, the work of British manufacturers, and, withal, is much more artistic and much less expensive. Nowadays it would seem that the grand old saying, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth thee to do, do it with all thy might,' is changed into 'Whatsoever thy hand is paid for doing, do it as slowly as it is permitted, and have no care to the might or the skill to be displayed.' As far as I read it, trades-unionism, by reducing all men to a great extent to one level, and by controlling to a great degree the amount and quality of the work to be done, is degrading and demoralising to the true workman. Competition in the world will and must, in the nature of things, increase, and, if he look not well to it, the British workman, unless he learns to think and act for himself, and to throw off the burden and tyranny of trades-unionism, will find himself beaten in the race. Let men be paid according to their skill and power of work, and they may be quite assured that all masters will gladly pay well and liberally for high skill of handicraft and honesty of labour, while the inferior men will naturally find the level, to which inferiority, whether in labour or material, naturally tends; then might we hope for

that fraternity and fellowship of interest and labour which gave, as Mr. Ruskin says, to our old buildings that 'distinct and indisputable glory, that these mighty walls were never raised, and never shall be, but by men who love and aid each other in their weakness ; that all their interlacing strength of vaulted stone has its foundations upon the stronger arches of manly fellowship, and all the changing grace of depressed or lifted pinnacle owes its cadence and completeness to sweeter symmetries of human soul.'

I do not think that the general public is so wanting in common-sense as not to know that good engraving, or indeed any kind of ornamentation of silver or other metal work, can be obtained without much cost of time and labour, and therefore must be paid for ; but why cannot we have in the ordinary tea and coffee services, and the general articles of table use, whether in silver or electro-plate, or in bronze ornaments, brass and iron doorplates, bell handles, gaseliers, candelabra, sconces, and other work of the kind, good form and general artistic character, instead of the commonplace and trumpery cast and wrought work of grotesque and ugly form which is now offered to us ?

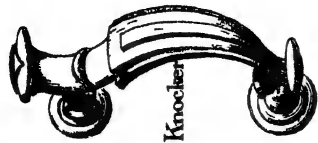
In Plate XX. I submit a sketch of an interior of a small hall, for the purpose of showing the effect of





• DETAILS •

Hall  
Hanging  
Lamp



A Brass Knocker



A Brass  
Escutcheon

A Simple Letter-plate

LETTERS

Domestic Iron and Brass Work •

PAHADUR

made by Thomas Elsiey •

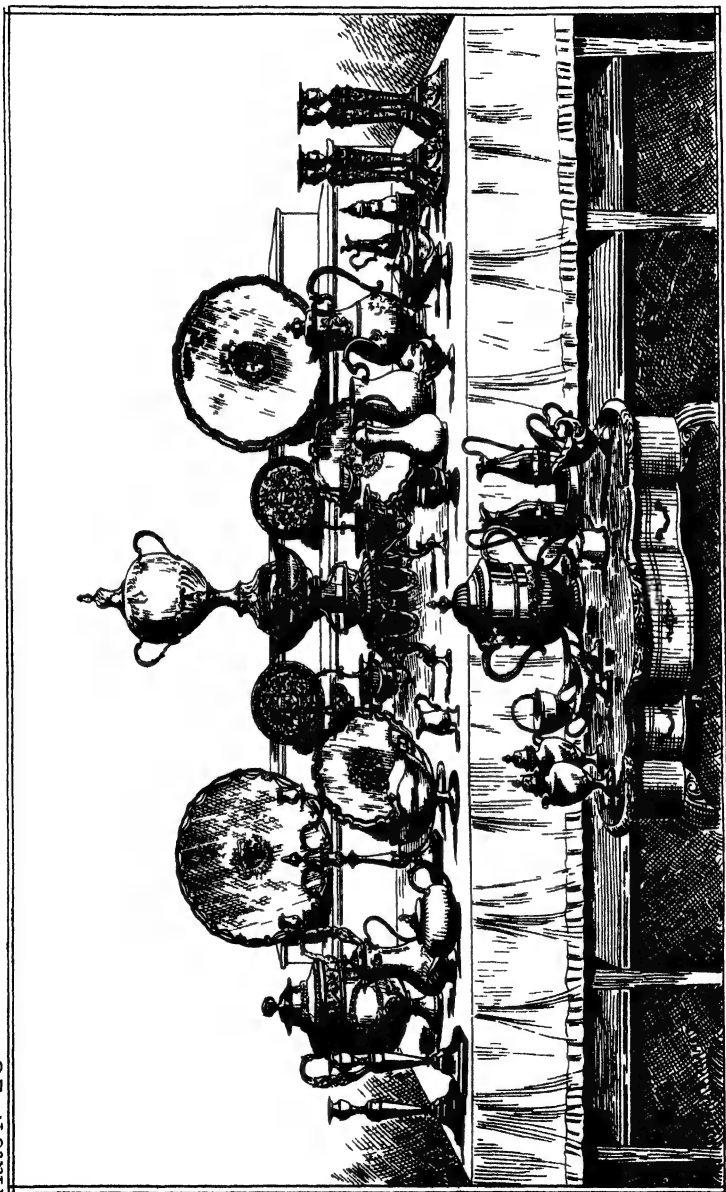
simple wrought ironwork in grilles for doors, in lieu of the objectionable lift-up shutters, and various designs for iron and brass work required for ordinary houses. The hanging lamp, from a design by Mr. Callcutt, is exceedingly graceful and common-sense in form, and, to my mind, infinitely more appropriate for a hall or staircase, than the usual telescopic fittings in general use ; it can be made in wrought iron, filled in with leaded glass, for a few pounds, or even in polished brass for the price of an ordinary hall lamp. There are many other manufacturers, who, like Messrs. Elsley and Messrs. Longden, have set themselves to work out the problem of providing articles of everyday use, in iron and brass, of good artistic design and shape, and of moderate cost, so that there need be no reason why the simplest piece of door or window furniture, or ordinary grates, fenders, lamps, fire-irons, sconces or bell-pulls, should be bad and vulgar in form as well as inferior in workmanship.

In silver and electro-plated work the elegance and simplicity of some of the seventeenth and eighteenth century examples might well be copied, at no greater cost to the manufacturer than the grotesque shapes, and badly executed and designed chasing and engraving now produced.

By the courtesy of Messrs. Widdowson and Veale, I am enabled to give an illustration (Plate XXVIII.) of various articles of silver of the period of George II., dating from 1730 to 1760. These well-known silversmiths have done their best to adapt, as far as practicable, old designs of good artistic character to modern plate, and their reproductions and adaptations are not only therefore of great artistic merit, but free from the inferior chasing and engraving which disfigure so much of the silver and electro-plate of the present day. It is gratifying to find that, considering how lamentably the art of the gold and silversmith has deteriorated in the last hundred years, there is evinced amongst good silversmiths a desire to adapt really good ancient forms to modern work.

Instead of the so-called mediæval 'coronæ,' and elaborate wrought and twisted brass and bronze gaseliers and brackets, utterly out of place in almost every house or room, and, generally, extravagantly expensive, why cannot we have the simpler forms of the later Jacobean days, in which use and suitability were the prominent features of the design?

Brass-work gets dull, and iron and bronze rusts or corrodes in town atmospheres, where impure gas and bad coal are so largely used. The simplest forms,







therefore, will be found most serviceable and satisfactory, and it is better to have the plainest objects which are good in outline, and fitted for the purpose, than the elaborate forms twisted and curled into all manner of curious shapes, which may be called 'mediæval' or 'Queen Anne.' Good brass *repoussé* sconces, fitted for gas or candles, can be now procured at moderate cost, and can be kept clean much more easily than the many-twisted and scrolled brackets which are generally used. Good wrought-iron work may be used for brackets, if left from the hands of the smith, and merely kept oiled; or some of the simpler sconces and candelabras, which can be fitted for gas, now made by Messrs. Powell and Sons and the Murano Glass Co., and these have the advantage generally of being graceful and artistic in form and colouring, and can easily be washed and cleaned. In all these kinds of artistic articles of domestic use, which are necessary in every house, choose those which are simple in outline and free from useless and expensive scrollwork or engraving of bad conventional or naturalistic form. The plainer all the service of the table and the generally useful fittings of a house are, the better will they be in taste, more easily cleaned, and much more lasting than those in which elaborate ornamentation, whether in mouldings,

stuck-on ornaments, or elaborate engravings are piled up for show, not for use. Do not have on your tables *épergnes* representing palm-trees with a camel grazing or a knight in armour sheltering beneath them, or metal-work of any kind made after the form of baskets, barrels, or other equally incongruous design.

If you will examine any of the bronze or brasswork of past times, you will find that the forms are good in outline, the ornament exceedingly delicate in treatment, forming part of the design, and not elaborately constructed and laid on, quite regardless of the construction; and while many pieces are elaborately adorned with beautifully modelled figure or other enrichment, there is always great grace and beauty of form, and eminent truth of construction; and I confess I see no good reason why we should not have an equally good character of work in all ordinary objects and articles of domestic use and furniture nowadays; nor why, if manufacturers are asked to carry out the design of an artist in which there is no more, and possibly not so much, work as in a similar piece of work out of their own stock, they should immediately put an enormous percentage on the cost, except that they, by this, admit that they are employing machines, and not artists, and that they will not

in any way strive to leave their ordinary groove or to make themselves acquainted with work of the best periods of art, so that they may direct their workmen in the right principles of artistic design and execution.

In concluding this series of lectures, I would again insist upon the fact that all true art should be the practical rendering, in good taste and in pleasant guise, of all the absolute necessities and requirements of modern life, and that all domestic art is false and bad which ignores the purposes for which the furniture, decoration, or general belongings of a house are to be put.

First of all, it is necessary that use and fitness should be the special attributes of the general furniture of our houses ; but I hold that there is no necessity that practical common-sense in the requirements of our houses should in any way interfere with good artistic treatment, and that everything may be, and should be, truthful and beautiful in design, form, and colouring.

If, however, we start from the false idea that art means quaintness, eccentricity, and the elaboration of curious forms or extraordinary colours, and that great elaboration and cost are its necessary adjuncts, we shall never really progress ; we may assist in bringing in a

fashion which shall die as all fashions do, and be as fickle and as fleeting as all fancies of an hour, founded only on idle thought or caprice ; but we shall never attain to that higher education or knowledge which intuitively brings with it an innate love for things beautiful and true, and which deprecates at once anything that is vulgar or commonplace.

If we are content to accept only as a fashion of the day the more artistic rendering of our rooms and, without consideration, to follow indiscriminately in the routine style of decoration and furniture which may for the moment prevail, we shall in no way have any real pleasure or delight in the work that is done, but shall live rather in dread of the time when a new style, a new fancy and fashion, shall be brought in, and when we shall have to follow, like sheep, the new order of the day.

I do not believe that things beautiful and artistic need necessarily be costly, although I, of course, admit that all works which require a great amount of skill and time in their production must of necessity demand a proportionate amount of payment for the time and labour involved ; and I should as soon seek to do away with the production of the more elaborate works of art in the present day, some of which may indeed

be the work of years, as I should ask for the suppression of the exquisite examples of ancient art, of great elaboration and costliness of design ; but all these are to a great extent luxuries, and not necessities, and will in all time be produced to satisfy the requirements and the higher artistic culture of those who delight in surrounding themselves with articles of luxury, and of the highest beauty in art. I have, in the lectures I have given, attempted rather to dwell upon the practicability of having good art in every-day life and in every-day things, and to point out, to the best of my ability, the means by which this may be obtained at a moderate cost, rather than to enter upon the subject from any point of view in which money is no object.

I have not pretended, nor do I pretend, that all my views are correct; we are all students, and with the true artist and real student our study ends only with our life. I have endeavoured to point out, in, I hope, a practical and common-sense manner, how your homes may be made more cheerful, more beautiful, and more artistic, at moderate cost. And I shall be satisfied if I have set any one of you thinking more earnestly, and more seriously, on the subjects I have dwelt upon ; and if any words of mine shall have been of practical use, or good, to those who have patiently followed me

in my arguments and remarks, or if I shall have influenced you, by all the means in your power, manfully to set your faces against all pretensions, shams, and conceits, which are the curse of good art of every kind.

The art of our houses should speak the language of our own day, and not be a reproduction or imitation of the art, no matter how beautiful, of other days, in which the conditions of life were totally different ; but even as, by study of all that is purest and best in past literature, we learn to speak and write well our own language and thoughts, so assuredly should we study the art-work of past ages, not as work to be cruelly travestied or slavishly copied in our own day, but as a means of imbuing us with a knowledge of all that is graceful and beautiful in art, whether in architecture, painting, or sculpture, or of those offshoots which are called 'industrial arts.' To some few of you, the sense of correctness of form, and truth, and harmony of outline or colouring comes naturally, as the musical words and rhythms flow from the brain of the poet ; but with most of us this can only be attained by serious study and observation, and hence, to a great extent, from this want of knowledge in ourselves, we are content to accept the interested babble of false teachers as

the truthful outcome of that knowledge which we ourselves do not possess.

Let us, then, by all means in our power, seek to foster and encourage a better taste and a more truthful treatment in the art-work of our homes, to avoid shams and pretentious conceits, seeking rather for things substantial, useful, and refined, than for those splendid and luxurious ; and for simplicity, comfort, and suitability, rather than pretentiousness, show, and elaboration in everything about us ; so that with better and more educated taste, combined with truth and beauty of design and construction of the work we have around us, we may live in a more healthy atmosphere of art in domestic life ; and, by the influence exercised by the demand created for higher artistic excellence in all trades cognate to art, be able to surround ourselves in our homes with the grace and preciousness of beauty and refinement.





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